

# **Martley, Knightwick and Doddenham**

## **Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016-2030**

**Material revision for consultation  
(Regulation 14) Summer 2024**



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# **1 Introduction and Background**

## **1.1 The status of this plan**

- 1.1.1 Martley, Knightwick and Doddenham are three adjacent parishes in the Teme Valley in West Worcestershire next to the County boundary with Herefordshire. They were designated a neighbourhood development area by the local planning authority (Malvern Hills District Council) in September 2013, and a neighbourhood development plan was formally adopted in January 2018. Martley Parish Council and Knightwick and Doddenham Parish Council wish to make a material revision to this plan because of recent housing developments. This is the draft of that revision for consultation as required by Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The draft revision has been prepared according to the 2011 Localism Act and subsequent legislation, and its policies and proposals are in general conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of December 2023 and the strategic planning policies set out in the adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP). The plan also takes account of advice contained in the Government's National Planning Practice Guidance. This latest version of the Neighbourhood Plan retains the Vision, Objectives and Policies of its predecessor, and covers the same time period, but adds some green spaces as well as updating the list of protected views<sup>1</sup>.

## **1.2 The Neighbourhood Area**

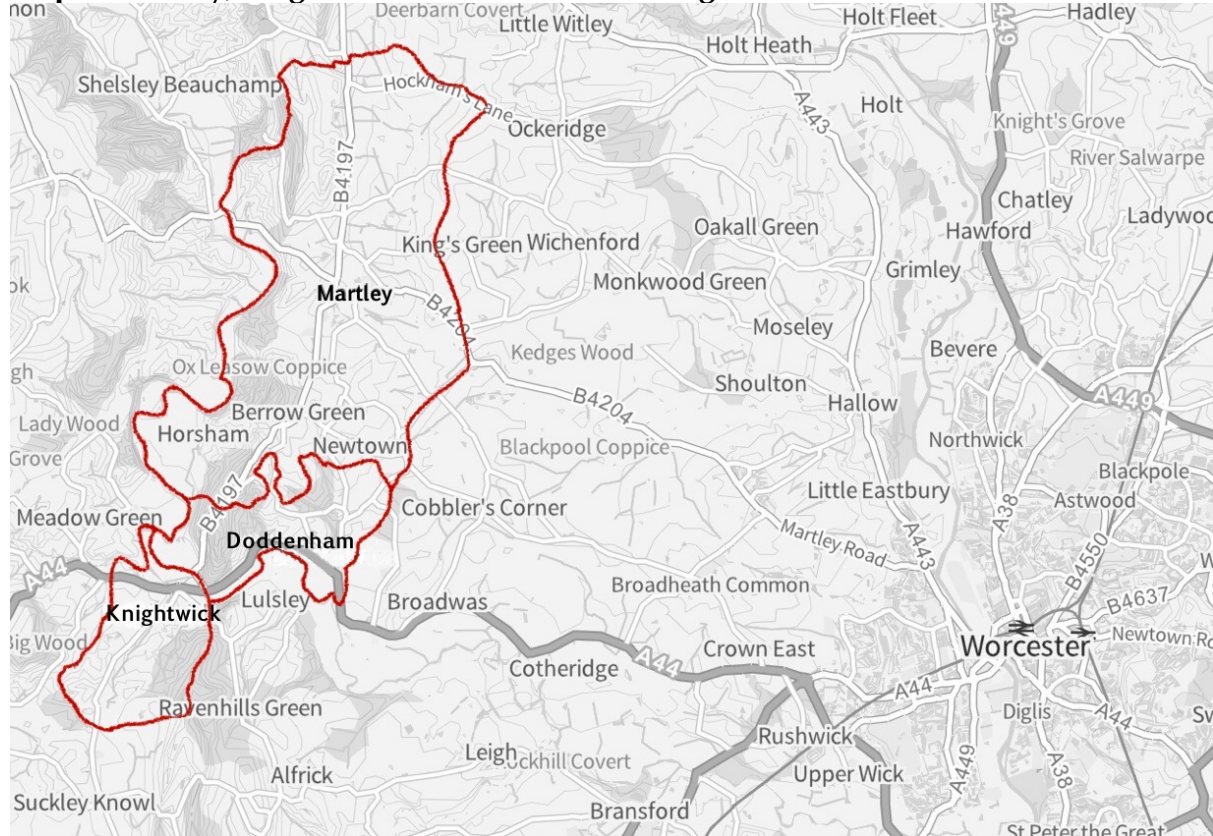
- 1.2.1 The Neighbourhood Area is shown in Map 1, which shows the boundaries of the three parishes and their geographical relationship to Worcester. The Area has two Parish Councils: Martley Parish Council, and Knightwick and Doddenham Parish Council. These formed a planning team comprising parish councillors and lay members to prepare the revised plan. This draft will be submitted for consultation to local residents and employers and to other organisations as required under Regulation 14.

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1. Policy MKD8 has been slightly amended to include additional green spaces.



**Map 1: Martley, Knightwick and Doddenham Neighbourhood Area**



1.2.2 Martley, Knightwick and Doddenham Parishes form a contiguous area of 2,501 hectares, located 13km West of the City of Worcester and within Malvern Hills District. The three Parishes have a complex and, in places, intimate landscape of winding lanes, irregularly shaped woodlands, riverside views, old orchards and highly productive farming land. Running north and south through the Parishes is the long wooded ridge that extends from the Malvern Hills in the South to Abberley Hill in the North. This is intersected at Knightwick by the deeply-wooded valley and the broad riverside meadows of the River Teme, which then flows East to join the Severn South of Worcester. Agricultural land in the area is of high quality and allows for a range of farming interests, including market gardening, fruit growing, livestock and cereal production as well as hop cultivation.

1.2.3 At the time of the 2021 Census, the three Parishes had 1741 residents, with 1386 in Martley, 116 in Knightwick and 245 in Doddenham Parishes. The main population centre is the village of Martley, which serves a wider rural area, having an ancient parish church, shop (including post office), garage, industrial estates, primary and secondary schools, parish hall, and a large commercially-managed sports centre. There are currently proposals to re-open the public house in the centre of the village. Knightwick Village is the next largest settlement, and has developed along the old drove road from Worcester to Bromyard, now crossing

the River Teme by a footbridge. Despite its name, the village mainly falls within Doddenham Parish. The village has the Talbot Inn and brewery, a butcher's and a GP clinic. Knightwick is also the location for a longstanding monthly farmers' market. On the edge of the hill between Knightwick and Martley is the Sunningdale estate in Doddenham Parish, which has been developed on the site of a former isolation hospital. Another large conversion is Laugherne Park, a former manor house and boarding school, which is now a gated cluster of houses on the Worcester Road East of Martley. There are several outlying hamlets, including Berrow Green, Prickley Green, Laugherne Park, Newtown, Willow Green, Kingswood, Pudford, Doddenham Mill, Collins Green and Hillside, with many smaller scattered settlements and houses throughout the three parishes.

- 1.2.4 The 2021 Census reported that the population of the neighbourhood area had a similar age profile to that of Malvern Hills District as a whole, with 16% under the age of 16 years, and 26% aged 65 years or above. The proportion of people in the latter group has risen from 21% at the 2021 Census. Despite this age profile, 83% described themselves as being in either 'very good health' or 'good health'. Thirteen percent said their health was 'fair', and four percent that they were in 'bad' or 'very bad health'. Six percent of the total population in the three parishes said they were disabled such that their day-to-day activities were limited 'a lot'. In common with most rural areas in England, almost all residents (98%) described themselves as 'white'.
- 1.2.5 The three parishes are rural in character, and surprisingly isolated from the nearest towns. The only main road in the neighbourhood area is the A44 between Worcester and Bromyard, which passes through Knightwick and Doddenham parishes. This is not a dual carriageway, and all other roads in the neighbourhood area are narrow and winding. The nearest railway station (Worcester Foregate Street) is 12.9 kilometres from Martley by road, and the nearest motorway junction is 21.4 kilometres away. There is a vestigial bus service in the neighbourhood area, which is mainly used by students travelling to the Sixth Form College and the Technical College in Worcester.

### **1.3 Challenges and planning issues**

- 1.3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan approved in 2018 saw three challenges for our communities: the growing proportion of elderly and infirm people in the population; the potential rise in energy prices; and the closure of village shops and pubs. These challenges remain in 2024.
- 1.3.2 The Office of National Statistics (ONS) have estimated that the population of Malvern Hills District will rise from 78,113 in 2018 to 92,799 in 2043<sup>2</sup>. Three-quarters (76%) of this increase will be people aged 65 years and above, and this

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2. Office for National Statistics (2020) *Population Projections for Local Authorities: Table 2*  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2>.

group will rise in 2043 to 35% of the District's population. The number of people of 80 years of age and above will double in this period, with a growing proportion living alone. This is a particular problem in the neighbourhood area because of limited public transport and the concentration of many public services in urban centres at a minimum of 13 kilometres away.

- 1.3.2 A small number of elderly people attend Wichenford Day Centre in a nearby village, which is open two days per week. There is also a cluster of supported flats and bungalows at Heaton House in Martley, which is managed by Platform Housing Association. It is not known how many elderly and disabled people living in the three Parishes are socially-isolated and in need of support. However, this may well become a greater problem for the community over the next 20 years. The AgeUK report, *The Challenges of Rural Living for Older People*, finds that aspects of living in the countryside present serious obstacles for many older people. These include cuts to local bus services, a lack of nearby shops and services, high cost of heating and living, lack of access to health and social care, and difficulties getting broadband<sup>3</sup>.
- 1.3.3 A key challenge confronting rural communities is the rising cost of heating. There is no supply of natural gas in the neighbourhood area, which means that the main sources of heating are oil and calor gas. The long-term trend in prices for these fuels has been upwards, with prices for domestic heating oil doubling in 2023. A report by the Rural Coalition noted that "one in three rural households do not have a mains gas connection and are reliant on heating oil, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) or solid fuel for their heating. Not having a mains gas connection has a significant impact on the prevalence of fuel poverty: 23% of all households that have no mains gas connection are living in fuel poverty (compared with 12% of all households that have a mains gas connection)"<sup>4</sup>. There has been growing local concern that some people may be unable to heat their houses sufficiently in winter, and the Memorial Hall in Martley now offers a service as a 'warm hub'.
- 1.3.5 It is not clear how rising energy prices and changing patterns of consumption will affect pubs and shops in rural areas. There has been a significant change in recent years in patterns of shopping, away from suburban supermarkets to a combination of shopping at local convenience stores (including village shops) and home delivery by major retailers. Nevertheless, about 1,000 village pubs and shops close each year in England. Closures of local shops and post offices are inconvenient for people who do not have access to their own transport or who do not use the

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<sup>3</sup> See also: Connors C, Kenrick M & Bloch A (2013) *Rural Ageing Research. Summary Report of Findings*. Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, London; Age UK (2013). *The Challenges of Rural Living for Older People*. <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-press/archive/the-challenges-of-rural-living-for-older-people/>

<sup>4</sup> The Rural Coalition (2010), *The Rural Challenge: Achieving Sustainable Rural Communities for the 21st Century*, Town and Country Planning Association, London <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/6331/The-Rural-Challenge-achieving-sustainable-rural-communities-for-the-21st-century-Rural-Coalition-2010.pdf>

Internet. Pubs and shops also provide a centre in which people can meet each other, exchange news, and gain a sense of a shared community<sup>5</sup>. Their closure results in greater social isolation.

- 1.3.6 There is a new challenge in addition to those identified in the original Neighbourhood Plan. This is the rapid suburbanisation of many country villages. The great majority of the housing allocations in the SWDP were built in early years of the plan period, which, combined with the delays in preparing a revision, has resulted in Malvern Hills District failing to meet the threshold of a five-year land-supply. This has led to multiple speculative housing developments in rural villages throughout the district, often approved on appeal. The cumulative effect has been a substantial loss of the best agricultural land<sup>6</sup>. Most of the new developments are suburban in character, often poorly-aligned with their villages. Lack of local public transport and employment opportunities results in residents relying almost entirely on private motor vehicles to shop, get to work, and take their children to school. They therefore promote an unsustainable 'carpark-to-carpark' lifestyles<sup>7</sup>.
- 1.3.7 Since the first version of the Neighbourhood Plan, two new housing estates have been approved in Martley village. The first (locally referred to as 'Sandyfields') is for 52 dwellings and was approved on appeal in 2023. The second site was identified in the draft South Development Plan Revision (SWDPR) despite being in conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan. A planning application was submitted by Lioncourt Developments for 83 dwellings, which was ultimately approved by the District Council in 2023. These developments are shown in Map 2. They are all on the West side of the village, beyond the normal walking distance to the local schools. This means that travel by motor vehicles to the schools and employment and shopping in Worcester must pass through the narrow lanes through the centre of the village.

## 1.4 The layout of this plan

- 1.4.1 This text includes the policy context of the neighbourhood plan (Chapter 2) and the vision and objectives (Chapter 3), while the following chapters define the planning policies for landscape (Chapter 4), built heritage (Chapter 5), housing (Chapter 6), open space (Chapter 7), community life, health and wellbeing (Chapter 8), local economy (Chapter 9) and transport (Chapter 10). The appendices include a schedule of proposed protected views, a glossary of technical terms and a bibliography.

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<sup>5</sup> IPSOS-MORI (2008) *Impact of Post Office Closures on Rural Communities. Summary Report. Report for the National Audit Office.*

<sup>6</sup> CPRE (2022) *Building on Our Food Security*. This found that "In the past 12 years we have lost over 14,000 hectares of prime agricultural land to development" (p5). See also Worcestershire County Council (2023) *State of Nature Report*.

<sup>7</sup> Transport for New Homes (2022) *Building Car Dependency. The Tarmac Suburbs of the Future*.

## 2 The Planning Policy Context

### 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 2.1.1 The most recent version of the NPPF in December 2023 introduced a number of changes to planning policy which have implications for neighbourhood plans. It confirms that:

“Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies. Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.”<sup>8</sup>

- 2.1.2 A key change from previous versions of the NPPF is that an up-to-date development plan overrules the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’, such that:

“Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.”<sup>9</sup>

- 2.1.3 The NPPF also gives greater protection against speculative developments where the neighbourhood plan became part of the local plan within the preceding five years and where the neighbourhood plan contains “policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement”<sup>10</sup>. The housing requirement for the neighbourhood area is specified in the local plan (and, if not, an estimate may be requested by the neighbourhood planning body). The NPPF advises that:

“Neighbourhood planning groups should also give particular consideration to the opportunities for allocating small and medium-sized sites... suitable for housing in their area.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2023) *National Planning Policy Framework*, para 29-30.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, para 12.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, para 14.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, para 71.

## 2.2 Local strategic planning policy

2.2.1 Following its adoption in February 2016, the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP)<sup>12</sup> provides the local strategic planning context for the Martley, Knightwick and Doddenham Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to conform to the strategic policies of the SWDP and aims to supplement the SWDP by:

- ▶ Providing a vision for the future of the three Parishes of Martley, Knightwick and Doddenham. This involves a broader community-based perspective than those relating to the development and use of land.
- ▶ Setting out planning policies that are additional or supplementary to those in the SWDP to be used to determine planning applications in the neighbourhood area. This involves setting out the criteria to help determine the suitability of any future development proposals, including the design principles to be applied. These are summarised in a small number of planning policies included in the neighbourhood plan.

## 2.3 Other relevant local strategies

2.3.1 There are several strategies approved by the District and County Councils which are currently in force, and whose policies have been incorporated in the formulation of this neighbourhood plan. These include:

*Martley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy* (2006)<sup>13</sup>. The older section of the village of Martley was designated a Conservation Area in 1981. Conservation areas were established by the 1967 Civic Amenities Act, and were defined as having 'special architectural or historic interest, the characteristics or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. The District Council is required by the Act to ensure that development proposals in conservation areas protect and enhance the character of the area. Malvern Hills District Council reviewed Martley Conservation Area in 2006, and the subsequent *Appraisal and Management Strategy* included a detailed analysis of the characteristic buildings of the Area and a detailed set of proposals for its preservation.

*The Ankerdine Common Management Plan April 2011 to March 2021*<sup>14</sup>. This was completed by Worcestershire County Council Countryside Service and was revised in 2013. It surveys the flora and fauna of this site in Doddenham Parish, and includes a plan for its future management. It does not appear to have been updated since then.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/>.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.malvernhillsgov.uk/conservation-area-appraisals>

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/directory\\_record/3311/ankerdine\\_common](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/directory_record/3311/ankerdine_common).



*The Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy 2023-2028.* The term 'green infrastructure' (GI) is defined in the report as 'the planned and managed network of green spaces and natural elements that intersperse and connect our cities, towns and villages. Green infrastructure comprises many different elements including biodiversity, the landscape, the historic environment, the water environment... and publicly accessible green spaces and informal recreation sites'. GI is a holistic approach to viewing and managing the natural environment; acknowledging the multiple benefits and vital services it provides and making tangible links to economic, health and social welfare agendas and aspirations. The components of GI include biodiversity, landscape, historic environment, access and recreation and water.

*Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan 2018-2036.* This sets out the long-term planning strategy for mineral development in the County, and seeks to enable sustainable development by balancing the need for minerals against any potential harm, while maximising the potential for social, economic and environmental benefits. It does not include any proposals for mineral extraction in the Neighbourhood Area.

*Landscape Character Assessment strategies produced by Worcestershire County Council.* Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a tool for identifying the patterns and individual combinations of features – such as hedgerows, field shapes, woodland, land-use, patterns of settlements and dwellings – that make each type of landscape distinct and often special to those who live and work in it. Landscape Character Supplementary Guidance has been prepared and adopted by Worcestershire County Council and is used by Malvern Hills District Council.

*Biodiversity Action Plan 2018-2027.* The County Council has produced a strategy for improving biodiversity, and this includes the designation of the neighbourhood areas as part of the Malvern Chase and Laugharne Valley Biodiversity Delivery Area.

*Worcestershire's Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2018-2030.* The County Council's strategy identifies the infrastructure improvements required to support business while reducing emissions and promoting health and wellbeing. Implications for the Neighbourhood Area are limited. The proposed new railway station on the Worcester to Hereford line at Rushwick would be 10.6km from Knightwick and 11.4km from Martley.

### **3 Vision and objectives and introduction to plan policies**

#### **3.1 Vision**

- 3.1. Results from consultations with the residents of the neighbourhood areas indicate how they wish to see their communities develop in the future. The household surveys carried out for the original plan found that the great majority of people living in the neighbourhood area are long-term residents. The main reasons people gave for moving into this area were: the attractions of the countryside; and a desire to live in an area of beautiful farmland and countryside. The earlier Martley Household Survey found that almost all (97%) respondents said they wished to preserve the countryside and the appearance of the village. These wishes have informed the Vision and Objectives for the Plan, which are unchanged from those in the original version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

##### **3.1.2**

Our Vision for Martley, Knightwick and Doddenham is for our three Parishes to continue to be a beautiful rural landscape which has at its heart, a viable and sustainable agricultural sector and efficient local businesses, set amongst scattered small villages, riverside meadows and wooded hills. Our community will provide a safe and stimulating life for people of all ages and occupations, having within its boundaries primary healthcare clinics, primary and secondary schools, places to shop, eat and drink, opportunities for leisure and recreation, and a range of places to work.

#### **3.2 Objectives**

Objective 1: To protect the rural character of our Parishes, with their characteristic landscape of fields, woodlands, riverside meadows and dispersed communities.

Objective 2: To maintain a range of employment opportunities for local residents, including workplaces in industrial and office estates and home-based work.

Objective 3: To respond to the housing needs of people living in the neighbourhood area, by supporting the provision of appropriate types of dwellings built to high standards of design in locations which respect the character of our communities and countryside.

Objective 4: To provide an active and stimulating community life for all the people in the area, being a pleasant and safe place to be young and a pleasant place to grow old.

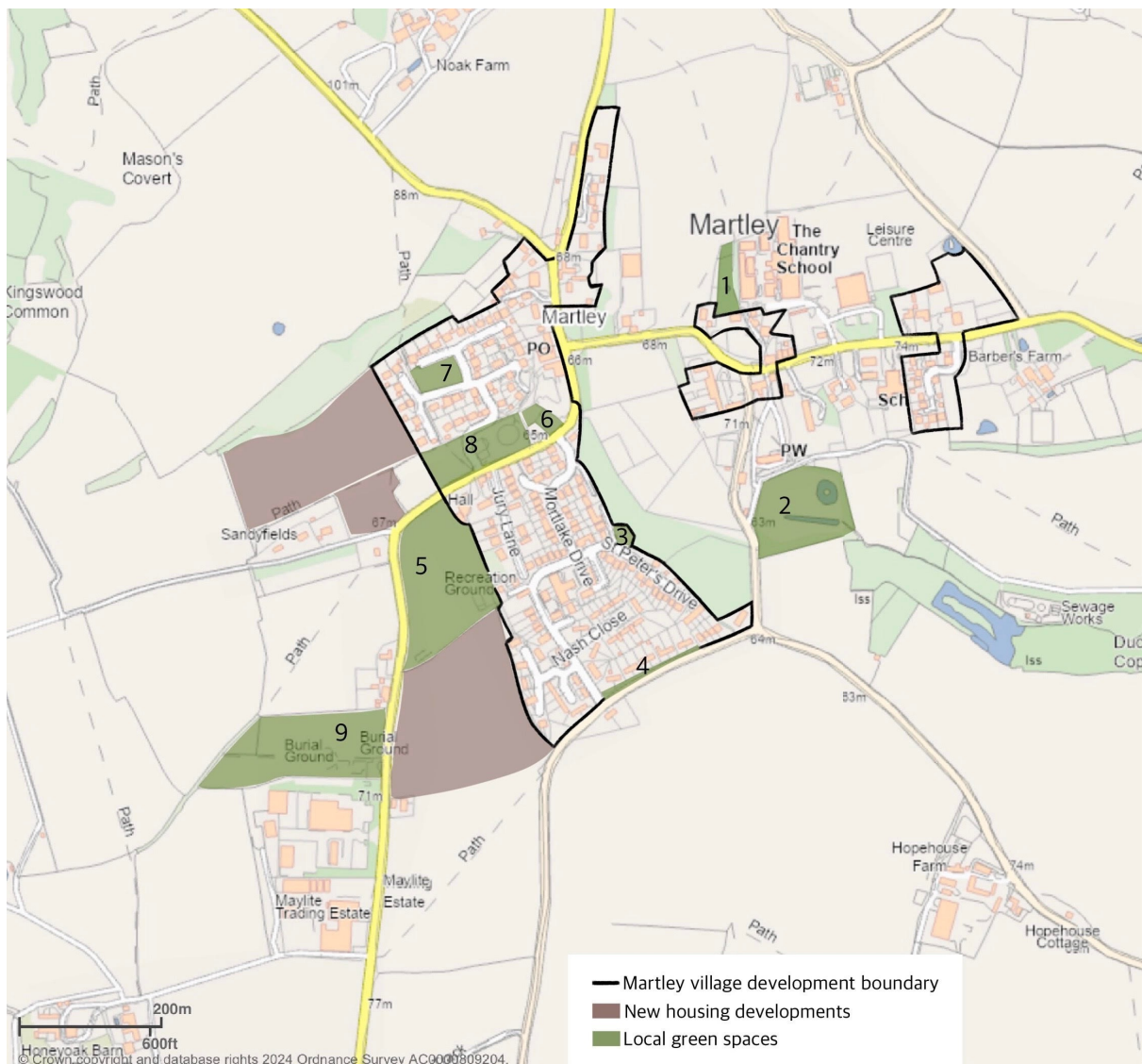
Objective 5: To hand to future generations of the three Parishes as good as or

even better quality of life than the one we have inherited.

### 3.3 Introduction to neighbourhood plan policies

3.3.1 Maps 2 and 3 are the Policies Map relating to Martley Village and Knightwick Village. These show areas of Local Green Space, which are protected from development other than in very special circumstances. These have been updated from the original neighbourhood plan, as set out in Chapter 7. Map 2 also shows the development boundaries for Martley, which are discussed in Chapter 6. There is no defined development boundary for Knightwick village.

**Map 2: Martley Village policies map**



**Map 3: Knightwick Village policies map**



## 4 Landscape

### Neighbourhood Plan objectives

Objective 1: To protect the rural character of our Parishes, with their characteristic landscape of fields, woodlands, riverside meadows and dispersed communities.

Objective 5: To hand to future generations of the three Parishes as good as or even better quality of life than the one we have inherited.

### 4.1 Geology

4.1.1 The three parishes, like much of the County, have a bedrock of Triassic sandstone and mudstone, with traces of Silurian limestone on the peaks of chain of hills which run North-South on the Western side of the Neighbourhood Area. This chain is broken near the village of Knightwick, which lies in a small plain that was once the bed of a meltwater lake at the end of the last ice age. Water from the lake breached the hills and the River Teme thereafter turned East to join the River Severn. The entire Neighbourhood Area falls within the Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark. The Geopark Way (a long-distance path from Bridgenorth to Gloucester), runs through the three Parishes, taking in the best geological sites as part of its route. There are seven sites on the local authority's register as being of special geological interest, and a further 30 sites that together attract increasing numbers of visitors to the area. There is an active Teme Valley Geological Society, which illustrates local interest in the area's special geological attractions<sup>15</sup>.

4.1.2 There are a number of landscape features which are of geological importance: The development of an old quarry site, known as 'Martley Rock', has exposed the most northerly outcrop of the Precambrian Malvern Complex. This inlier of faulted Precambrian Malvern Complex and Cambrian Malvern Quartzite Formation is surrounded by strata of the Halesowen Formation, which unconformably overlies the Silurian Raglan Mudstone Formation. Most unusually, five geological periods can be viewed on the same site in very close proximity. The site includes information panels for visitors.

The Knightwick limestone quarries are on the Southern boundary of that Parish. There are several limestone quarries along the ridge from Hanging Bank Coppice in the north to Ravenshill Wood in the south. The Knightwick-Suckley-Lulsley boundaries meet at the ridge. There is a sandstone (Bromsgrove) quarry near the old railway bridge at Lulsley and,

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<sup>15</sup>

[www.geo-village.org](http://www.geo-village.org).



what are known locally as the 'boys and girls quarries', at the top of Ankerdine, from which some local buildings such as the former Knightwick Parish Church (now converted into a mortuary chapel) were built.

**Figure 1: Martley Rock**



**Figure 2: Knightwick quarries**



The Nubbins is a sandstone outcrop which forms a wooded escarpment that dominates the centre of Martley village. It includes small quarries, which have provided material for several historic local buildings, including Martley Parish Church.

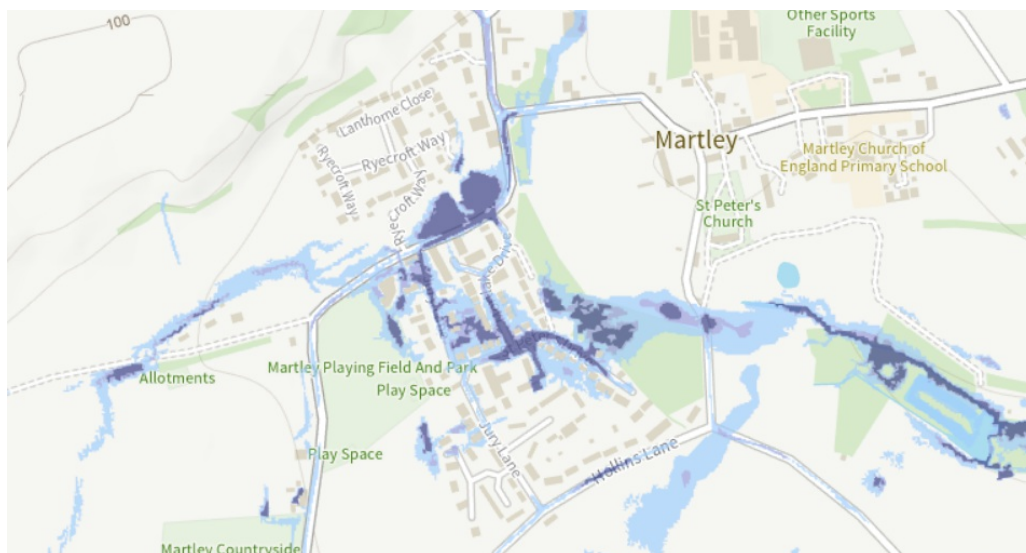
**Figure 3: The Nubbins**



4.1.3 The part of the Neighbourhood Area West of the North-South ridge and around the Knightwick Gap is drained by the River Teme. This is shallow and fast-flowing, and frequently floods. Every settlement next to the River has been inundated within recent memory, and every one of its bridges has been washed away or damaged by floods at some point in its history. This is a significant problem in Knightwick, where the River floods at least once/year. This can inundate the Talbot Inn and frequently blocks the road from the village to the A44. The Environment Agency categorises the entire village as falling within a flood zone 3, indicating a high probability of flooding. This is shown in Map4 (dark blue indicates Flood risk 3). Martley is also affected by frequent floods, in this case from surface water. The part of the Parish East of the ridge is drained by the Laugherne Brook, which is a small stream flowing East. All five lanes leaving the village go



uphill and the bedrock has limited permeability. As a result, an aquifer has formed beneath the village. Heavy rain causes the water table to rise and flood low-lying fields and lanes as well as the cellar in the Crown Inn. Map 5 is a section of the Environment Agency flood risk map and shows that substantial areas of the village are either high or medium risk for surface-water flooding<sup>16</sup>. Once again, dark blue indicates a high flood risk.



<https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map?easting=375385&northing=259727&map=Surface Water>

## 4.2 Landscape character

4.2.1 A systematic assessment carried out for the original neighbourhood plan summarised the characteristics of the Neighbourhood Area that make it distinctive and unique. These include:

- A. *An environment of considerable biodiversity.* The three Parishes form an area of great biodiversity, unusual for the English Midlands. Semi-natural woodland cloaks the sides of the limestone ridges and beneath its canopy, there shelters a rich shrub sub-layer and ground flora, with abundant birdlife. The local landscape is characterised by a mosaic of ancient fields and meadows set amongst woodland and woodland clearings, inset with many half-timbered farmsteads and cottages. In open areas, patches of calcareous grassland can be found. Silurian grassland is scarce in England and it is typified by species which include upright brome, ploughman's spikenard, rock-rose, dyer's greenweed, salad burnet, pyramidal orchid and wild thyme. Butterflies and insects drift across unimproved meadows and the limestone areas are rich in up to eight species of orchid, some rare.

Recorded larger mammals include the brown hare, fox, badger, weasel, stoat and polecat. Roe deer and muntjac might be seen in the half-light at dawn and dusk but few are fortunate enough to glimpse the nationally-scarce dormouse that forages at night for nuts and berries in the upper branches of hedgerows and hazel woods. However, the ecological 'rarities' in the local landscape are only the highlight of what is a fine example of the rural English countryside with carpets of bluebells and primroses, spikes of mullein and fox gloves, sprays of honey suckle, autumn gentian and old man's beard.

The diversity of habitats in the Neighbourhood Area results in a wide range of bird species as well as the usual garden birds. In Winter, there are flocks of up to 50 skylarks, 20-30 linnets, and 20-30 yellowhammers in the fields. In Spring and Autumn, there are passage migrants including stonechats and wheatears, while Summer visitors include blackcaps, chiffchaffs, whitethroats in most hedgerows, swifts around the churches and house martins around the local farms. Resident birds include barn owls, little owls, green and greater spotted woodpeckers, red-legged partridges and pheasants, and there is a substantial rookery in Martley with both jackdaws and rooks nesting. Raptors include buzzards and sparrow hawks, with an occasional sighting of a peregrine falcons and hobbies.

- B. *Winding lanes leading to sweeping views.* The three Parishes are intersected by several steep and winding lanes, which can be dark in summer because of vegetation. These lead to hills and crests with some of the finest views in England. From Ankerdine Common, it is possible to see from the Cotswold edge down the Severn Valley, the length of the Malvern and Suckley Hills and across to the hills of Herefordshire. There are also fine views from the

B4197 road near Collins Green, from Berrow Hill (not open to the public) and Kingswood Lane.

- C. *A landscape divided by many distinctive boundaries.* These include boundaries of mature hedges and trees, and red sandstone walls within and between settlements. Sandstone walls are particularly striking along the Worcester Road from the centre of Martley Village to Martley Court, while there are striking sandstone banks along the Clifton Road from Martley Village, and down Church Lane in Martley. The wooded banks down from Ankerdine Hill to Knightwick Village have spectacular drifts of snowdrops followed by primroses each Spring.

**Figure 4: Stone and hedge boundaries**



- D. *Riverside meadows and wooded banks.* The River Teme is a major feature of the Neighbourhood Area, flowing along the Western edge of Martley Parish, where its banks are hilly meadows followed by steeply-wooded hills succeeded in turn by the meadows of Horsham and Knightwick. The River then forms the boundary between Knightwick and Doddenham Parishes, where there are wide riverside meadows.

**Figure 5: River Teme**





4.2.2 Significant local landscape features which form an important part of the local landscape character include:

*Ankerdine Hill.* This is a prominent feature which dominates Knightwick and Doddenham Parishes. Its wooded slopes are a backdrop to the village, but also are a prominent feature for people entering the Neighbourhood Area along the A44 road. At the summit is Ankerdine Common Local Nature Reserve, which covers an area of 7.3ha. It consists predominantly of oak and ash woodland with yew and holly under-storey on a steeply sloping hillside with small open glade areas.

**Figure 6 Ankerdine Hill from the East**



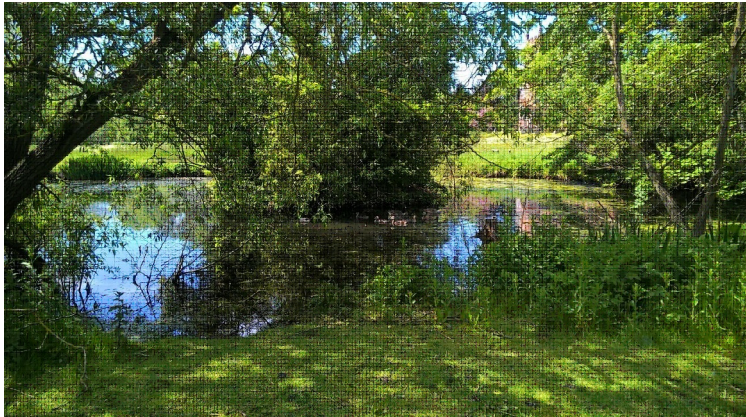
*Berrow Hill Camp* is a large univallate hillfort situated in a commanding position on a steep sided hill overlooking the River Teme and Martley Village. The monument survives as an irregular elongated hillfort enclosure with a modified escarpment encompassing the top of the hill. It is a scheduled monument.

**Figure 7: Berrow Hill**



*The Millennium Green* is a landscaped area in a field next to Martley Parish Church, which includes a nature reserve and a small lake with island for nesting wildfowl. It is managed by a charitable trust.

**Figure 8: Millennium Green**



*Weirs on the River Teme.* Kingswood Weir is an area of shallow water in the River Teme on the boundary of Martley and Clifton upon Teme Parishes, where the river runs through a tranquil landscape of meadows and woodland. This was once the site of three water mills and the lost hamlet of Kingswood. There are weirs on the Teme to the south of Ankerdine Farm (where otters can be viewed) and at Knightwick where the mill building survives.

*Rodge Hill* is a wooded limestone ridge which forms part of the Worcestershire Way long-distance footpath and is part of the long range that reach north from the Malvern Hills to Abberley Hill. There are magnificent views to the West over the Teme Valley and across to the Bromyard Plateau. In the distance to the North-East are the Clee Hills.

**Figure 9: Rodge Hill**



### 4.3 Protecting landscape character

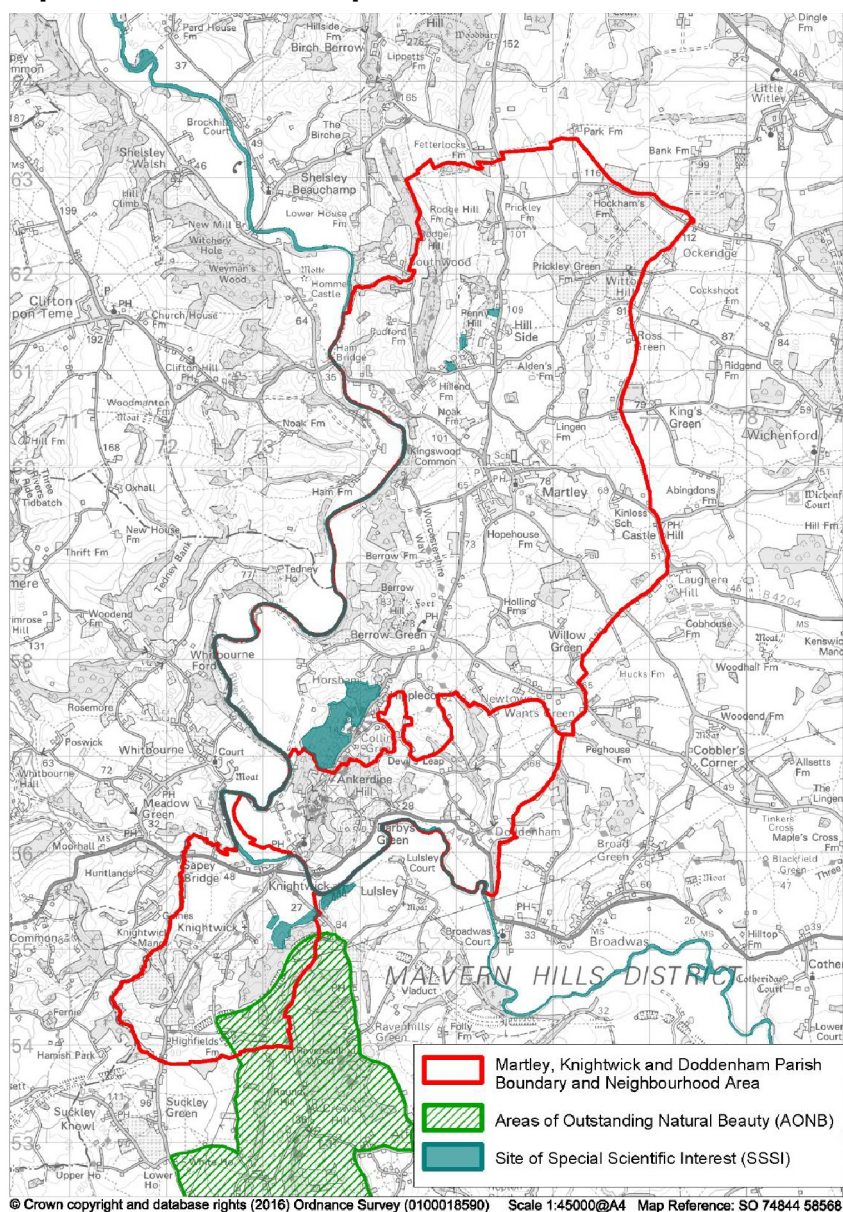
- 4.3.1 One of the three over-arching objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework is “to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”<sup>17</sup> Large scale developments in the countryside, such as poly-tunnels, glasshouses and solar arrays can have a significant visual impact on the landscape. The South Worcestershire Development Plan sets out the strategic local planning policies that seek to conserve and enhance the natural environment. Policies SWDP22 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), SWDP23 (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and SWDP25 (Landscape Character) are particularly relevant. These set out detailed criteria against which development proposals are assessed.
- 4.3.2 There are a number of protected landscapes in the Neighbourhood Area. Part of Knightwick Parish falls within the Malvern Hills National Landscape. The Partnership Board has applied to Natural England for a Northwards extension of the boundary to include the chain of hills running to Abberley Hill, including most of Knightwick and Doddenham Parishes and the Western half of Martley Parish. There are several sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs). These include: the River Teme along its length; Hay Wood and Tinker’s Coppice; Hillend Meadow and Orchard; Lord’s Wood Meadows; Penny Hill Bank; and Quarry Farm Meadow. Ankerdine Common on the summit of Ankerdine Hill is a designated Local Nature Reserve, and there is a designated Millennium Green next to Martley Parish Church which has been developed as a village green and wildlife conservation area, and is owned by a charitable trust. Map 4 shows the boundaries of the National Landscape and the local SSSIs.

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<sup>17</sup> *Op cit*, Para 8c.



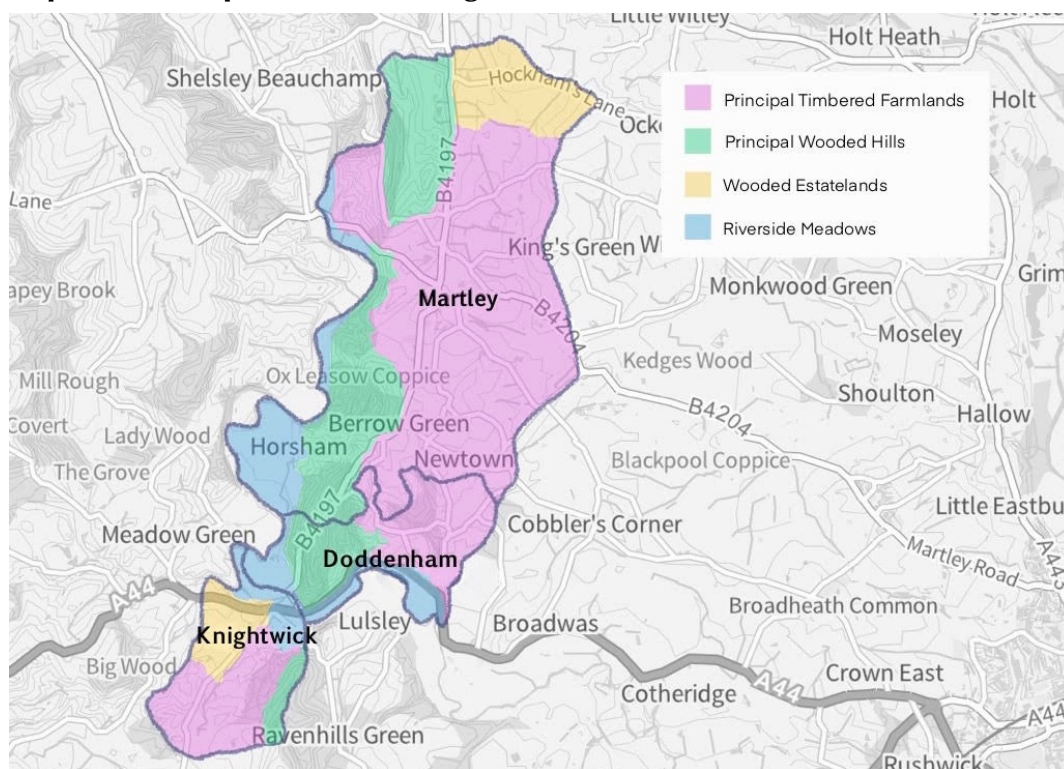
**Map 4: Protected landscapes**



4.3.2 The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) completed by Worcestershire County Council<sup>18</sup> categorised the greater part of the Neighbourhood Area as ‘principal timbered farmlands’, with the North-South ridge as ‘principal wooded hills’, and the land immediately adjacent to the River Teme as ‘riverside meadows’. The area also includes areas of ‘unenclosed commons’; these such as around Ankerdine Common, and ‘wooded estatelands’ which include two areas of apple orchards on the edges of the neighbourhood area. The LCA recommends specific measures to protect each type of landscape. Landscape types in the Neighbourhood Area are shown in Map 7.

<sup>18</sup>[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20014/planning/1006/landscape\\_character\\_assessment](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20014/planning/1006/landscape_character_assessment)

**Map 7: Landscape character categories**



- 4.3.3 *Principal Timbered Farmlands* are defined in the LCA as ‘rolling lowland landscapes with occasional steep-sided hills and low escarpments characterised by a mosaic of agricultural land cleared directly from woodland, on a piecemeal basis, together with land enclosed from former localised areas of open fields, resulting in their dispersed pattern of farmsteads and wayside cottages and lack of strong settlement nuclei. The LCA recommends that tree cover and hedgerows should be conserved and enhanced, the character and pattern of lane networks should be retained and the dispersed settlement pattern maintained.
- 4.3.4 The landscape type *Principal Wooded Hills* is defined in the LCA as ‘upstanding, wooded landscapes with a sloping, in places steeply undulating topography, often on the edge of higher ground. The LCA recommends that the ancient broad-leaved character of woodlands should be conserved and restored along with the irregular field patterns.
- 4.3.5 The landscape type ‘*Riverside Meadows*’ is defined as ‘linear riverine landscapes associated with a flat, generally well-defined alluvial floodplain, in places framed by steeply rising ground. These are secluded pastoral landscapes, characterised by meandering, tree-lined rivers, flanked by alluvial meadows which are defined by hedge and ditch boundaries. The LCA recommends that all existing areas of permanent pasture should be conserved and that continuous tree cover along hedge lines, ditches and watercourses should be retained and enhanced. Existing wetland habitats should be conserved and opportunities for further wetland habitat creation sought.

- 4.3.6 Unenclosed Commons is 'a category of landscape offering tremendous variety of scale and size, the overriding characteristics being the lack of enclosure and, usually, a land use of rough grazing. The smaller unenclosed commons are ranked as features within other landscape types but a few are considered to be of sufficient extent to warrant separate classification. Settlement, where present, is usually restricted to wayside dwellings situated around the perimeter of the common'. The LCA recommends conserving and enhancing the visual distinctiveness of open common areas and the spatial pattern, scale and specific character of wayside dwellings associated with commons.
- 4.3.7 The landscape type '*Wooded estatelands*' is defined in the LCA as 'a large-scale, wooded agricultural landscape of isolated brick farmsteads, clusters of wayside dwellings and occasional small estate villages. The LCA recommends that hedgerows and woodland be conserved, with new planting of native broadleaved species.
- 4.3.8 The distinctive landscape character is protected in Policy MKD1 Landscape Design Principles, set out below.

#### Policy MKD1 - Landscape Design Principles

To be supported development proposals must:

1. Demonstrate they are sited, designed, and of a scale so as not to substantially harm the Significant Views when seen from locations that are freely accessible to members of the general public, listed in Appendix 1;
2. Include boundary treatment of hedges, sandstone walls, or bricks that match those used in the locality;
3. Demonstrate landscaping proposals are suitable for the setting, and any loss of ancient woodland, aged or veteran trees, or established hedgerows, is necessary and that the benefits of development in that location clearly outweigh the loss;
4. Demonstrate any poly-tunnels, glasshouses and solar farms cannot viably utilise brownfield sites or lower value agricultural land, and are sited and screened to avoid significant harm to residential or visual amenity;
5. Protect from development the local geological and landscape features identified on Map 4: Ankerdine Hill and Common; Berrow Hill; The Nubbins; The Millennium Green; Martley Rock; Penny Hill Quarry; River Teme Weirs; Rodge Hill; and Knightwick Limestone Quarries.



## 5 Built heritage and design guide

### Neighbourhood Plan objectives

Objective 1: To protect the rural character of our Parishes, with their characteristic landscape of fields, woodlands, riverside meadows and dispersed communities.

Objective 3: To respond to the housing needs of people living in the neighbourhood area, by supporting the provision of appropriate types of dwellings built to high standards of design in locations which respect the character of our communities and countryside.

### 5.1 The local built heritage

- 5.1.1 The three Parishes have a diverse range of landmark architecture, including Martley Parish Church, Knightwick Mortuary Chapel, the Admiral Rodney and former Crown public houses, several fine mansions and farmsteads, and domestic conversions of former schools and chapels. The register of statutorily listed buildings shows that the three parishes contain a relatively large number of timber-framed buildings, often 17th or 18th Century in origin and timber-framed with brick infill. Several buildings which apparently date from later centuries with Georgian facades also have earlier elements of timber-framing. These include The Old Hall, Martley Court and Laugherne House, all in Martley, and Knightwick Manor and the Old Rectory, Knightwick. In each case an earlier range has been incorporated to function as service rooms behind the new construction. The presence of a good number of 18th and 19th Century buildings, either newly-built or added to earlier fabric shows the continuing prosperity of this rich farming area.
- 5.1.2 The architectural details, designs and styles of traditional local buildings make a positive contribution to local character. The traditional building materials throughout the neighbourhood area are wood, stone and brick. These are typically combined, with timber-frames infilled with local redbrick, sometimes on a stone base. Stone has been quarried locally from the 12th century or earlier, and includes both a very red sandstone and a grey limestone. Indeed, Martley Parish Church was originally built with alternating levels of the two stones, as noted by Brooks and Pevsner<sup>19</sup>. Brick making was a local industry and the Ordnance Survey maps for the end of the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries show the land around Knightwick Cottage (formerly 'Brickfields Cottage') marked as 'Old Brick Works', with a Clay pit indicated alongside. Figure 10 shows a sample of brickwork in the Neighbourhood Area. There are various shades of Midlands redbrick, although other shades were also used in the St Peter's estate in Martley.

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<sup>19</sup> Brooks A & Pevsner N (2007) *Worcestershire*. Yale University Press, New Haven and London.

**Figure 10: Brickwork.**



**Figure 11: Window designs**



5.1.3 Figure 11 shows characteristic designs for windows. Several have curved upper edges. Dormer windows occur even in the most recent dwellings. Figure 12 show the designs of doors. Many have wooden or tile roofs with some elaborate porches. These are found in several recent as well as older dwellings. Figure 13 shows characteristic rooflines. Roofs in older houses are typically of grey slate, with dark brown tiles predominating in newer buildings. Finally, Figure 14 shows a sample of the wide diversity of chimneys in houses built before this century.

**Figure 12: Doorways**



**Figure 13: Rooflines**



**Figure 14: Chimneys**



5.1.4 A further distinctive feature of the neighbourhood area is the large number of historic farmsteads and smaller farms. This was noted by Brooks and Pevsner, and confirmed by the Worcestershire Historic Farmsteads Project. Data from the Historic Environment Record Search (Worcestershire County Council Archive and Archaeology Service, 2015) identified 50 historic farmsteads and smaller farms in the three parishes, of which two include buildings dating from the 15th Century, three with their earliest buildings dating from the 16th Century, and another 19

with their earliest buildings dating from the 17th Century<sup>20</sup>. Many of these have been converted into accommodation or for commercial uses.

- 5.1.5 Some of the smaller recent developments have followed traditional local design, as seen in Figure 15. There have also been sensitive domestic conversions of the former Doddenham Parish Church and the former village hall in Knightwick. However, most developments from the mid-20th Century onwards have followed standard developers' pattern book, particularly the St Peter's Estate built in the early 1980s. The Hopyards Estate based on an allocation in the SWDP has a more diverse layout and roofscape, as shown in Figure 16.

**Figure 15: Recent housing in Martley**



**Figure 16: Hopyards Estate**



## 5.2 Conservation and historic areas

- 5.2.1 The particular character of Martley Village has been recognised with the designation of the Conservation Area (Map 7). The Conservation Area encompasses the oldest housing in the village as well as adjacent green space. The Martley Conservation Appraisal and Management Strategy, June 2006 describes how Martley's special interest can be summarised as the way in which the village has developed and evolved historically, its archaeology, its layout, the form, size, design and siting of its older buildings and its other surviving architectural and geological features. The layout and open space hierarchy of the village, its vernacular architecture and boundary treatments contribute to the special character of Martley along with its landscape setting.

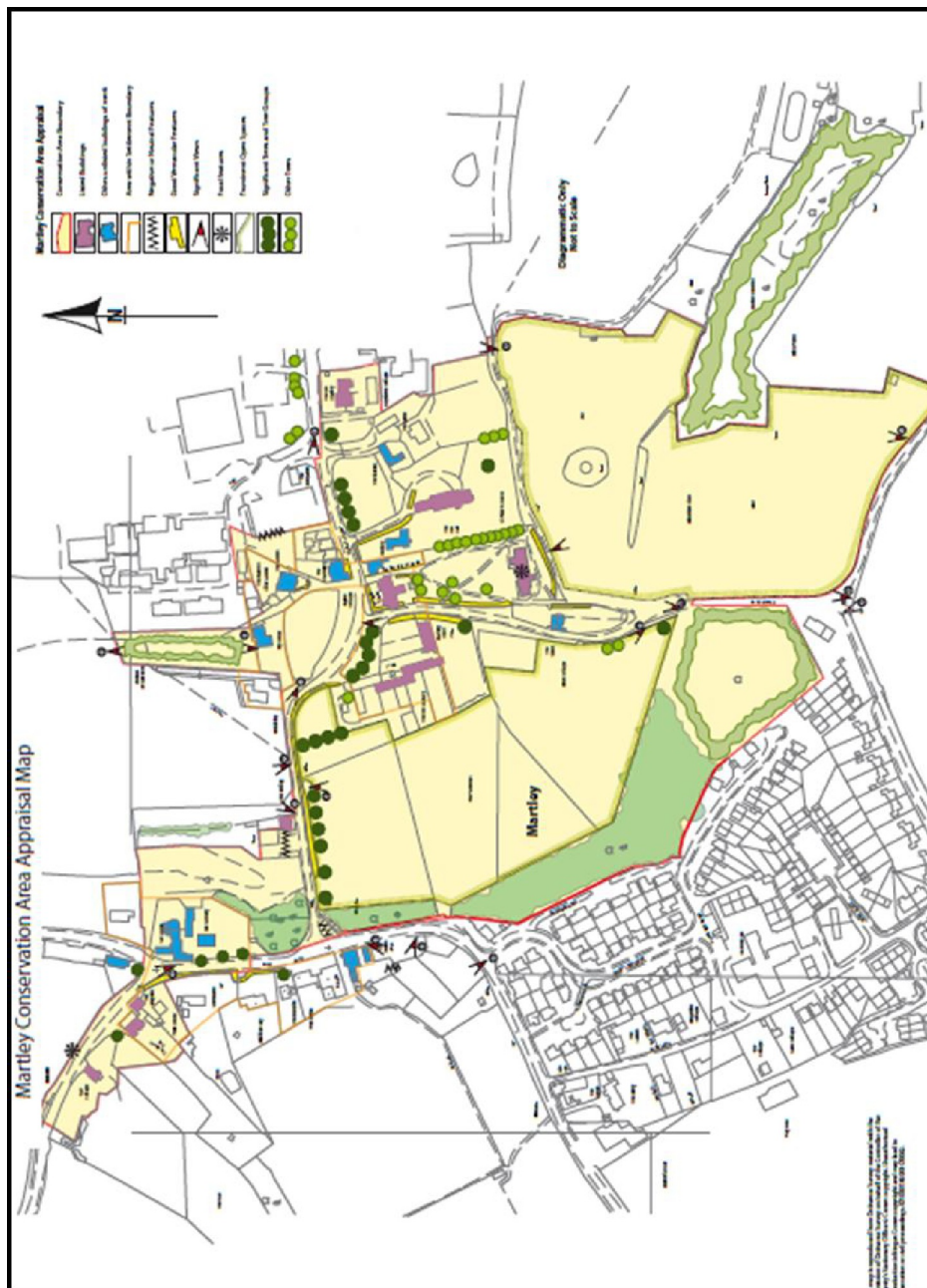
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[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20230/archive\\_and\\_archaeology\\_projects/1023/historic\\_farmstead\\_characterisation](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20230/archive_and_archaeology_projects/1023/historic_farmstead_characterisation) ).



## Map 7: Martley Conservation Area



5.2.2 Seven distinct sub-areas are identified in the assessment.

1. Historic Core
2. The Rectory and the Old Hall Area
3. Maple Cottages, the Chandlery and Beyond
4. Junction of the Great Witley and Clifton Roads
5. The Smithy
6. The Water Meadows
7. The Paddocks.

- 5.2.3 Views form an important component of any conservation area and they help to define the special interest of the place. Alterations to individual properties and open spaces can cause major changes and can have a detrimental effect on the Area. Identifying particular views of importance can highlight those aspects that are important and can help to ensure their preservation. Design guidelines are provided for the Conservation Area and these have been included in the policies in this Plan. The significant views identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy are listed in Appendix I.
- 5.2.4 Apart from central Martley, the other hub with a density of buildings is the area in Knightwick Village around the Talbot Inn, immediately to the north of the River Teme which divides Knightwick and Doddenham parishes (Figure 20). The place names of Knightsford and Woodford indicate the importance of river crossings here, before the present road and pedestrian bridges were built in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, as does the former presence of an inn on each river bank. The Church of St Mary, designed by A E Perkins, the Worcester Cathedral architect, was built in 1856 in an accomplished Gothic-revival style. It stands close to the Talbot and the river. Adjacent, on the opposite side of the road which climbs Ankerdine Hill, is an attractive cluster of community buildings erected due to the philanthropy of the local landowner, John Francis Greswolde-Williams. These include the School and schoolhouse designed in 1888 by Henry Rowe and a group of three pairs of almshouses, forming an L-shape on plan, which step up the hill and were designed in 1889. A house for the district nurse was added in 1893. A late example of a timber-framed building from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century served as the village post office. These buildings and the surrounding housing form the nucleus of the village centre for Knightwick and Doddenham. Further up Ankerdine Hill is Sunningdale Sanatorium opened in 1902 as a treatment centre for Tuberculosis. A pre-existing, late 19<sup>th</sup> Century villa was converted and then flanked by long, single-storey wards which faced west towards the view across Herefordshire and Wales. The patients' rooms had verandas to allow open-air sleeping. The location of the site with its pure air and above the level of any fog from the river valley were deciding factors. The lodge and part of a range of nurses' housing survive, now adapted. There are therefore grounds for applying for conservation area status for Knightwick.

**Figure 20: Knightwick Village**



### 5.3 Maintaining quality

- 5.3.1 The NPPF states that “The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve”<sup>21</sup>, and that “Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design”<sup>22</sup>. The NPPF requires the design of estates to adhere to the National Design Guide, the National Model Design Code, and local design codes where they exist. The NPPF stresses the importance of tree-lined streets, noting: “Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible”<sup>23</sup>.
- 5.3.2 Advice on conserving and enhancing the historic environment is set out in Section 16 of the NPPF. This indicates that heritage assets should be recognised as an irreplaceable resource and conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Detailed local policy is set out in SWDP6 (Historic Environment) which states that development proposals should conserve and enhance heritage assets, including assets of potential archaeological interest, subject to the provisions of SWDP 24 (Management of the Historic Environment). Their contribution to the character of the landscape or townscape should be protected in order to sustain the historic quality, sense of place, environmental quality and economic vibrancy of south Worcestershire.
- 5.3.3 In the wider Neighbourhood Area, there is a need to ensure that new development responds positively to the distinctive local character of the parishes and is of high quality design. Generic house styles especially of similar, materials, proportions and patterns could have an adverse impact on existing settlements and dilute the strong local identity of this very rural part of Worcestershire. The parish’s distinctive character and built heritage are protected in Policies MKD2 and MKD3.

#### Policy MKD2 - Building Design Principles in Martley Conservation Area and its Immediate Setting

1. New buildings or extensions should reflect the overall character of buildings within and around the setting of the Conservation Area, in terms of size and scale, form, proportion, materials and detailing. However, good quality, modern materials used in an innovative or challenging design which complements those qualities which contribute

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<sup>21</sup> *Op cit*, para 131.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, para 139.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, para 136.

to character and appearance will also be acceptable. Extensions should be in materials sympathetic to the main building.

2. New buildings or extensions should be sited according to the locally prevailing building pattern within the conservation area and immediate surroundings, and service buildings such as garages and outbuildings sited so as to be subsidiary to the main house and not unduly prominent within the street scene.
3. New boundary or dividing walls, railings or hedging should be built from materials that match those used in the locality or be of native species, and designed into new developments to suit the character of the village.

#### Policy MKD3 - Building Design Principles outside Martley Conservation Area

All new development proposals must meet the following requirements:

1. New development should enhance and reinforce the local distinctiveness of the area and proposals should show clearly how the general character, scale, mass, and layout of the site, building or extension fits in with the 'grain' of the surrounding area. Care should be taken to ensure that building(s) height, scale, and form, including the roofline, do not disrupt the visual amenities of the street scene. Generic house styles that do not reflect the distinct local character will not be acceptable.
2. Redevelopment, alteration or extension of historic farmsteads must be sensitive to their distinctive character, materials and form.
3. Driveway and entrance gates should reflect the rural nature of the Parish.

## 6 Settlement pattern and housing need

### Neighbourhood Plan objectives

Objective 1: To protect the rural character of our Parishes, with their characteristic landscape of fields, woodlands, riverside meadows and dispersed communities.

Objective 5: To hand to future generations of the three Parishes as good as or even better quality of life than the one we have inherited.

### 6.1 Settlement pattern

- 6.1.1 The settlement pattern in the Neighbourhood Area comprises dispersed villages, surrounded by a scattering of buildings, with many open spaces and piecemeal development in varied styles and with irregular layouts. A characteristic feature of is that many buildings are side-on to the road, are not uniform in size or style, and are arranged in irregular clusters. This dispersed settlement pattern is a characteristic feature of rural parishes on the North-West of the County, as observed by Brooks and Pevsner<sup>24</sup>. Martley Village is a scattered settlement and has three distinct clusters of housing, each of which has a separate development boundary, as shown on Map 2. The Western cluster comprises houses along the B4197, the St Peters Estate and contiguous areas of older housing, and the new Hopyards Estate. The middle cluster includes the original settlement near the Parish Church, while the Eastern cluster comprises newer houses along the Worcester Road and the area designated for houses now under construction at the corner of the Worcester Road and Barber's Lane.
- 6.1.2 In Martley Village, the Conservation Area report of 2006 noted that the field known as the 'Paddocks' and the open farming land on the opposite side of the Worcester Road (B4204) effectively divide different parts of the village and contribute to its dispersed character. A similar effect is produced in Knightwick Village by the meadows between the Talbot Hotel and the River Teme. As a result, there are views out from all settlements (including Martley Village) into open countryside (including many views of wooded hills). This is particularly striking in Knightwick Village, which is dominated by the wooded slope of Ankerdine Hill and Osebury Hill and the river valley carved by the River Teme which divides them. Some other settlements (Sunningdale, Hillside and Berrow Green) are located on sides of wooded hills, while Collins Green follows the road (B4197) along the crest of the hill between Berrow Green and Ankerdine Hill. All parts of Martley Village have views of the iron-age hillfort at Berrow Hill.

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<sup>24</sup> Brooks A & Pevsner N (2007) *Worcestershire*. Yale University Press, New Haven and London



- 6.1.3 The NPPF recognises that planning policies and decisions should ensure that development responds to local character and history, and reflects the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation<sup>25</sup>. Policy 21 in the SWDP requires that development should address settlement character and that the distinct identity and character of settlements should be safeguarded. Policy MKD4 protects the distinctive settlement pattern in the Neighbourhood Area.

Policy MKD4 - Maintaining the Settlement Pattern.

To be supported development proposals must meet the following settlement design principles:

1. Proposals for new-build residential development must demonstrate their scale (in terms of number of dwellings) responds to local character and development history; and reinforces local distinctiveness in particular including open spaces between buildings, and irregular layouts.
2. New developments must be fully integrated into the existing settlement through layouts which promote permeability and accessibility to neighbouring residential areas, open spaces and facilities.
3. Infill developments should be in keeping with the scale of the immediate surrounding area and not significantly adversely affect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. Proposals will be required to demonstrate that proposed buildings on infill plots will reinforce local distinctiveness through incorporation of open spaces which are characteristic of the dispersed and scattered settlement pattern.

## 6.2 Existing housing stock

- 6.2.1 At the time of the 2021 Census, there were 732 households in the Neighbourhood Area. Over a quarter (29%) comprised a single person. Three-quarters (74%) of houses were either owned outright or owned with a mortgage. Fourteen percent of houses were social-rented, mainly from two housing associations and almost all in Martley Parish. The remaining 13% were rented from private landlords or were rent-free. House prices are probably higher than the average for the District as a whole, according to the median council tax bands, which are D for Martley Parish and E for Knightwick and Doddenham Parishes, compared with C for Malvern Hills District as a whole.

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<sup>25</sup> *Op cit*, para 135c.

- 6.2.2 In the last 50 years, there has been a gradual increase in the number of dwellings in the three Parishes. Since the approval of the original Neighbourhood Plan in 2018, a substantial number of new dwellings in Martley Village have either been completed, are under construction, or have planning approval. These have included some infill dwellings, as well as a small estate on the Witley Road. Two new dwellings are currently being built on the East side of Martley village. Map 2 shows the most important commitments as at 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024. These are:

83 dwellings under construction by Lioncourt Developments on a field South of the playing field. This site was allocated provisionally in the SWDP revision, and a planning application for a larger number of dwellings was approved in 2023.

52 dwellings on land called 'Sandyfields' to the West of the village. An outline application was approved on appeal in 2023. A reserved matters application is pending a decision.

### 6.3 Housing need

- 6.3.1 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to:

"... establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period... Within this overall requirement, strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations."<sup>26</sup>

The SWDP Review Regulation 19 document identifies a need for 30 new dwellings for the Neighbourhood Area over the plan period of 2021-2041 (equivalent to 1.5/year). The SWDP Review allocated 71 dwellings for the Neighbourhood Area, resulting in a net need of minus 41 (ie 41 more dwellings than are required to meet local need).<sup>27</sup> As noted above, the site allocated in the SWDP Review has now been approved for 83 dwellings (now under construction), while a further 55 have been approved in outline. This produces a total of 138 dwellings, which is presumably 108 above that required to meet local need.

- 6.3.2 Other estimates of local housing need are available from the 2021 Census and from applications for housing made by Malvern Hills District Council. The Census found only three households in the Neighbourhood Area with less bedrooms than

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<sup>26</sup> *Op cit*, paras 66-67.

<sup>27</sup> *Op cit*, Appendix E.

required according to the standard Census calculation. On the other hand, the majority of households (421) have two or more spare bedrooms. Under-occupancy is common when children leave the family home and one of the spouses or partners dies. Surveys of elderly people identify a considerable unmet demand for smaller and more adapted housing<sup>28</sup>. An additional factor in rural areas is the need for elderly people to move to village centres so as to be closer to shops, public transport and primary healthcare while maintaining links within their own community<sup>29</sup>. Malvern Hills District Council Housing Department records ten households in Martley Parish who have applied for rehousing. These include four that require one-bedroom, five that require two-bedroom, and one that requires a three bedroom house.

- 6.3.3 There is an unmet demand for self-built and custom-built housing in England<sup>30</sup>  
The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 requires local planning authorities to establish local registers of custom builders who wish to acquire suitable land to build their own home. It also requires local authorities to have regard to the demand on their local register when exercising planning and other relevant functions. Self-build houses offer the possibility of a more diverse type of dwelling than estates, in keeping with Objective 3.
- 6.3.4 The two estates which have received planning permission include 76 private market dwellings, 47 'affordable' houses and nine houses with shared ownership. They include bungalows, detached, detached, semi-detached and terraced housing. The Sandyfields estate include an allocation of land for five self-build houses, although these will need separate planning applications. It is therefore clear that these two developments are more than sufficient to meet housing need in the Neighbourhood Area. These new dwellings will be completed by 2026. It is possible (although unlikely) that there may be insufficient vacancies or houses for sale to meet local need towards the end of the plan period in 2041. There is therefore case for identifying a suitable site for a small number of new dwellings which would become available after 2040. This should be within easy walking distance of the schools and the shop, and thereby avoiding yet more traffic being funnelled through the central T-junction.
- 6.3.5 A suitable site which meets these requirements is the Crown in the centre of Martley village. This includes both the former public house (now being restored for re-opening) and additional land which has planning permission (M/21/02150) for six new dwellings. Work on the latter has not commenced. The approved plan is shown in Map 8, although the owners have reported that the arrangement of dwellings may be revised.

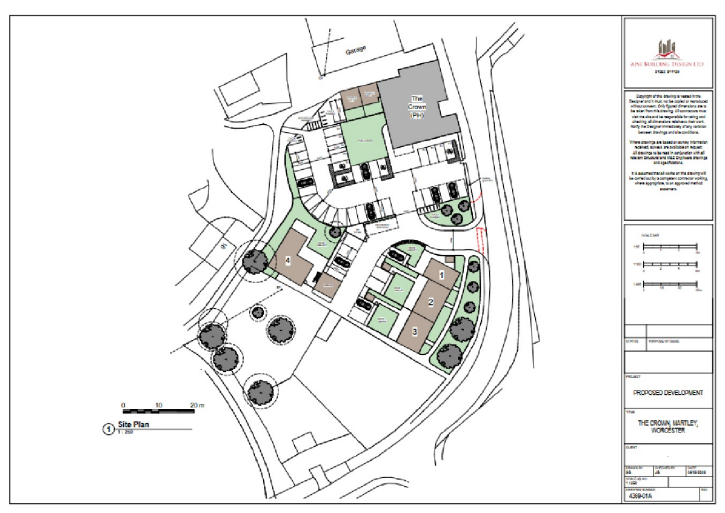
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<sup>28</sup> Shiro Ota: House of Commons Library Briefing Paper No. 07423. (9 December 2015). *Housing an Ageing Population (England)*.

<sup>29</sup> Connors et al - footnote 2 p9

<sup>30</sup> Wendy Wilson: House of Commons Library Briefing Paper No. 06784. *Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing (England)*

## Map 8: Small site for development



6.3.6 In the rest of the Neighbourhood Area outside the development boundary, new housing development will be strictly controlled. The NPPF states that “Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
- b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
- c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;
- d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building; or
- e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it: is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.”

6.3.7 There are a number of policies in the adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan which provide the local strategic planning context for new housing development in the countryside. Policy SWDP 13 encourages the effective use of land, Policy SWDP 16 indicates the circumstances under which affordable housing may be developed outside settlement boundaries while Policies SWDP 18 and SWDP 19 seek to limit replacement dwellings and rural

worker's housing in the countryside. Policy MKD6 will be used to help determine planning applications for new housing outside of the development boundary in Martley Village and in the rest of the Neighbourhood Area which is open countryside.

6.3.8 The following policies concern housing location and type:

Policy MKD5 - New Housing Development within the development boundary

New infill housing development, and conversion, re-use or extension of an existing building for residential use, will be supported within the Martley village development boundary defined on Map 2.

Policy MKD6 - New housing development outside the development boundary

New housing development in the open countryside, outside the Martley village development boundary (Map 2), will be only supported when it is:

1. A dwelling clearly necessary for use by rural workers including persons employed in agriculture, horticulture, forestry or a rural enterprise; or
2. Affordable housing on an exception site to meet identified local need; or
3. A replacement of an existing dwelling with established use rights and where the replacement dwelling does not exceed the original footprint by 30%; and
4. Securing the future of a heritage asset, or is of a design that is of exceptional quality or truly innovative.

Extensions to existing dwellings will be supported, providing that they are subordinate to, and do not dominate the character and appearance of the original dwelling. Conversions or the re-use of existing buildings will be supported providing there is no need for substantial reconstruction or need for large extensions.

Policy MKD7 - Housing Mix

To be supported development proposals for new homes must demonstrate how they meet local housing need, in particular for:

1. Properties with either one or two bedrooms to meet the needs of first time buyers and small families; or
2. Properties designed to be suitable for the elderly, which are located close to key facilities; or
3. Plots for individual self-build houses.



## 7 Open spaces

### Neighbourhood Plan objectives

Objective 4: To provide an active and stimulating community life for all the people in the area, being a pleasant and safe place to be young and a pleasant place to grow old.

Objective 5: To hand to future generations of the three Parishes as good as or even better quality of life than the one we have inherited.

### 7.1 Green spaces

7.1.1 The designation of land as 'local green space' provides special protection against development on areas of grass or woodlands that are of particular importance to local communities. This is protection similar to that of land in a Green Belt, but imposes no new restrictions or obligations on landowners. Designation does not confer a new right of way. Management of land designated as local green space remains the responsibility of its owner. The NPPF states that: "designation should only be used where the green space is:

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land<sup>31</sup>.

7.1.2 These requirements indicate that there are three reasons for designation: nature reserves; recreation areas; and areas which are visually important. There are three nature reserves in the Neighbourhood Area:

*Ankerdine Common Local Nature Reserve*. This is the largest area of designated common ground in the neighbourhood area. The entire area of open ground and oak and ash woodland extends over 7.3 ha, and within this the area of open ground is 3.7ha. A full survey of the fauna and flora of the Common has yet to be completed, but it is known to have a colony of dormice, a European protected species. There is a small car park (reached by a narrow driveway off the B4197), a picnic bench, an interpretation board and waymarked walks. The Common is also on the route of all the long-distance footpaths that pass through three parishes. Ankerdine Common is owned and managed by Worcestershire County Council, and this has produced the *Ankerdine Common Management Plan*, which

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<sup>31</sup> *Op cit*, para 106.

includes detailed proposals for the maintenance of the Common. See Figure 22 .

**Figure 22: View North from Ankerdine Common**



*Martley Millennium Green* (Figure 10). This is discussed in Chapter 4, and comprises a pool (with an island), a wildflower meadow and is surrounded by hedges. The Green is owned and managed by a charitable trust.

*Martley Burial Ground Meadow*. This has been created since the original neighbourhood plan, and is a large expanse of grass next to the Burial Ground, which is being developed as a wildflower meadow. See Figure 22.

**Figure 22: Burial Ground meadow**



- 7.1.3 The main green space important for recreation is Martley Playing Field, which is described in the next chapter and is shown in Figure 23. The remaining green spaces are included because they are visually-important for their communities. The most impressive of these is at Sunningdale (Figure 24) and the various riverside meadows in Knightwick. These maintain the rural aspect of the village, while they include trees along the river and a line which screen the buildings along the old main road from traffic. Other green spaces include areas in and around the Hopyards (Figure 19) in St Peter's Estates, and along the frontage of the houses in Hollins Lane, all in Martley.

**Figure 23: Martley playing field, pavilion, Memorial Hall and changing rooms**



**Figure 24: Sunningdale Green**



7.1.4 Tables 1 and 2 list the Local Green Spaces identified in the neighbourhood plan and how they meet the criteria for designation set out in the NPPF. Those in Martley are shown in Table 1 and Map 2. Those in Knightwick and Doddenham are set out in Table 2 and Map 3. Policy MKD8 protects these green spaces.

**Table 1: Local Green Spaces in Martley**

Name	Proximity to the community it serves	Demonstrably special	Local in character	Not an extensive tract of land
1. Chantry Academy Conservation Area	Immediately West of Chantry Academy	Wooded area including a double row of damson trees forming a tunnel. In Conservation Area.	Includes a well-designed geology garden with boards interpreting the local landscape.	0.2ha

2. Millennium Green	Just South of Martley Parish Church,	Includes a pool (with an island used by Sir Charles Hastings, founder of the BMA), a meadow of wild flowers, and is surrounded by hedges	The Green is owned and managed by a local charitable trust, which is currently developing a strategy for its continuing use	1.4ha
3. Badger Green	Corner of Badger Close and St Peters Drive, in Martley village.	Secluded green space surrounded by trees, providing a welcome open area in the middle of a housing estate.	Used by local children as a safe play area	0.06ha
4. Hollins Lane banks	Facing the houses in Hollins Lane.	Broad grassy bank providing a sense of space in front of houses on the edge of the village.	Used by children as a safe play area	0.1ha
5. Martley Playing Field	Next to the Memorial Hall.	Only public playing field in neighbourhood area.	Recreation ground. Used by football and cricket clubs and for annual garden show. Includes children's playground and skatepark.	2.1 ha
6. Crown Orchard	By Crown Public House in centre of Martley village.	Planted with apple trees that were once a characteristic of the landscape around Martley.	Strong visual appeal in the centre of the village.	0.1ha
7. Hopyards Green	Centre of Hopyards Estate.	Designated green space in the plan for the estate.	Provides a pleasant central area in the estate with views of the Nubbins hillside.	0.4ha
8. Crown Meadow	In front of Hopyards Estate.	Landscaped area being planted with fruit trees.	Provides a future community orchard and the site for the sustainable drainage pool	0.7ha
9. Burial Ground meadow	Opposite new housing estate.	Wildflower meadow with views of Berrow Hill	Open space next to burial ground, with pavilion.	2.0ha



**Table 2: Local green spaces in Knightwick and Doddenham**

Name	Proximity to the community it serves	Demonstrably special	Local in character	Not an extensive tract of land
1. Ankerdine Common	On summit of Ankerdine Hill, above Knightwick village.	Area of ancient oak and ash woodland, with colony of dormice. On route of a long-distance footpath	Largest area of designated common ground in neighbourhood area. Frequently visited because of excellent views.	7.3ha
2. Sunningdale Green	Green facing Sunningdale Estate	Landscaped grounds forming the only open space in the estate.	Fine sloping hillside facing the Teme Valley	7.1ha
3. Riverside Damson Orchard	Between GP Surgery and footbridge over the River Teme.	Flowering fruit trees along side of old drove road.	Strong visual appeal.	0.1ha
4. Knightwick Common	Triangle of land between A44 and old drove road.	Only open public space in Knightwick Village.	Includes fine row of trees that screen this part of the village from the A44.	1.0ha
5. Talbot Garden	Triangle of land in front of the Talbot Inn between carpark and the Teme.	One of the few riverside beer gardens in the County.	Riverside frontage in front of ancient inn.	0.2ha
6. Riverside meadow.	Meadow North of the Teme, opposite green space 3.	Confirms fine views from the bridge up the valley of the Teme.	Valued local view.	1.2ha

**Policy MKD8 - Local Green Spaces**

The Local Green Spaces as identified on Maps 2 and 3 and in Tables 1 and 2 will be protected from development except in very special circumstances.

## 7.2 Green infrastructure

7.2.1 Green infrastructure is defined in the NPPF as: “A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and

wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity<sup>32</sup>. It includes parks, private gardens, agricultural fields, hedges, trees, woodland, green roofs, green walls, rivers and ponds. The term covers all land containing these features, regardless of its ownership, condition or size. Green infrastructure has a particularly significant role to play in conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

- 7.2.2 There is a need to protect existing green infrastructure within the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area and to promote the creation of new green infrastructure if new development proposals come forward. Such green infrastructure could include woodland and other environmental assets in the area to preserve the existing ecosystem network. Policy SWDP5 requires housing development proposals (including mixed use schemes) to contribute towards the provision, maintenance, improvement and connectivity of Green Infrastructure (subject to financial viability) as follows:

For greenfield sites exceeding 1ha gross - 40% Green Infrastructure.

For greenfield sites of less than 1ha but more than 0.2ha (gross) – 20% Green Infrastructure .

For brownfield sites – no specific Green Infrastructure figure.

- 7.2.3 Multi-functional green infrastructure is important to underpin the overall sustainability of a development by performing a range of functions including flood risk management, the provision of accessible green space, climate change adaptation and supporting biodiversity. An example of a green infrastructure provision is the sustainable drainage system, which can prevent stormwater causing sewage overflows. Actions such as re-naturalising watercourses can also bring multiple benefits. These can include flood attenuation (which can also be helped by woodland planting), roosting opportunities for bats, the installation of bird nest boxes, and the use of native species in the landscape planting. Policy MKD9 confirms green infrastructure for the Neighbourhood Area.

Policy MKD9 - Providing green infrastructure to support local biodiversity

The inclusion of ecological enhancements in the landscaping and building design of development proposals will be supported. Proposals could include enhancements such as sustainable drainage systems, re-naturalising watercourses, woodland planting, roosting opportunities for bats, the installation of bird nest boxes and the use of native species in the landscape planting.

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<sup>32</sup> *Op cit*, Annex 2. Glossary.

## 8 Community life, health and wellbeing

### Neighbourhood Plan objectives

Objective 4: To provide an active and stimulating community life for all the people in the area, being a pleasant and safe place to be young and a pleasant place to grow old.

Objective 5: To hand to future generations of the three Parishes as good as or even better quality of life than the one we have inherited.

### 8.1 Community life

8.1.1 The neighbourhood area has a very active community life, supported by an excellent range of public services. There is a wide range of organisations based in the three parishes. The Parish Churches in Martley and Knightwick are part of a team ministry, which in addition to Holy Communion, prayer meetings and family worship, holds breakfast and lunch meetings in other local premises. Local societies include the Martley Amateur Dramatic Society, the Bellringers, the Cricket Club, the Gardening Club, the Ramblers, the Path-or-Nones (footpath improvement group), the Nomads Rifle Club, the Royal British Legion, the Women's Institute, Knit and Natter, the Young Farmers' Club, and the Youth Club. A football club is being formed. Movies in Martley shows films in the Memorial Hall each month, while Zumba dancing, line dancing, short mat bowling, tai-chi, and yoga all take place in the Hall. The Teme Valley Geological Society (TVGS) organises a programme of lectures and secured EU funding to discover, conserve and educate about matters geological. TVGS is also active on a wider European stage in the Geo-Villages initiative. A monthly coffee morning in Martley Memorial Hall raises over £5000/year for national and local charities.

8.1.2 There are two licensed premises in the neighbourhood area: The Talbot Inn at Knightwick (which offers accommodation, brews its own beer and is the venue for a successful farmers' market) and the Admiral Rodney at Berrow Green (which also offers accommodation). The Crown public house in Martley Village has been closed for several years, but building work has commenced to re-open the building as a pub and café.

8.1.3 Public services in the Neighbourhood Area include:

*Education.* Martley Village has both the 140-place Martley Primary School and the 875-place Chantry School, which has academy status and provides secondary education until Year 11. The most recent Ofsted inspections rated both schools as 'good'. Children are bussed into both schools from a wide area including the Western side of Worcester City. The Primary School has a preschool with places for 20 children/day, from two years old

until primary school age, and also runs a breakfast club and after school club for 20 children up to 13 years of age. A mother and toddler group meets in Martley Memorial Hall.

*Healthcare.* There are GP practices based at Knightwick and in Great Witley. The latter holds surgeries in a clinic in the centre of Martley Village three mornings/week. Both provide pharmacy services and are highly-rated in NHS surveys. The nearest hospital with A&E services is the Worcestershire Royal Hospital over 17 kilometres distant.

*Village hall.* Martley Memorial Hall is one of the largest village halls in the County, with a capacity of 280 people. There has been a major programme of improvements in recent years, including rebuilding the kitchen and toilets, resurfacing the hall floor, redecoration and the purchase of new furniture. The Village Hall includes a library, which is part of the County Library Service and is staffed by volunteers. Martley Parish Church owns the Parish Hall on the Berrow Green Road, which is used for meetings and services. This has been converted from a former Pupil Referral Unit. There is no village hall in Knightwick and Doddenham, but the Talbot Inn has several rooms which are used for meetings by local organisations.

*Sports facilities.* In the grounds of the Chantry School is Sport Martley (owned by the School and operated on a management contract by Freedom Leisure), which is used both by the School and the general public. This includes a well-equipped fitness room, a climbing wall, tennis courts, and a large sports hall. Sport Martley provides a holiday club for children aged 5 – 14 years, with activities including football, basketball, athletics, and arts and crafts. There is a large playing field next to the Martley Memorial Hall, which is used by the very active cricket club and for the annual Horticultural Show. There is a BMX and skateboard track, a play area, a multi-use games area (MUGA) and some fitness equipment at the far end of the playing field away from the roads. There is also a small changing room and pavilion. A new pavilion is under construction, as shown in Figure 23.

*Churches.* There are two places of worship in the Neighbourhood Area: the parish church of St Peter's in Martley and the mortuary chapel in Knightwick. Both are the responsibility of the Worcestershire West Rural Team of the Church of England. Services take place weekly in Martley and monthly in Knightwick, while there are also communion services twice/month in Heaton House in Martley.

*Burial ground.* The churchyard in Martley has limited space for further interments, and the Parish Council has created a burial ground with gazebo and adjacent wildflower memorial garden.



- 8.1.4 Country walking is popular in the three parishes, which lie among a complex network of rights-of-way. These have been maintained by voluntary activity and negotiations with landowners. There are several local waymarked footpath routes, while three long-distance trails pass through the Neighbourhood Area. These include the Geopark Way and the Worcestershire Way, which are North-South routes, and the Three Choirs Way which passes East-West through Knightwick and Doddenham Parishes.

## 8.2 Promoting health and wellbeing

- 8.2.1 Participation in an active community lessens the risk of loneliness and thereby helps people maintain a healthy life longer. Other factors promoting health and wellbeing in the three parishes are proximity to countryside and green spaces, opportunities for recreation, and the availability of excellent primary health care services. The design of the built environment can also have implications for how individuals live their lives, affecting their experience of access to community facilities and the amount of physical activity people undertake.
- 8.2.2 This is recognised through national planning policy. The NPPF states that:  
“Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings... [and] plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments...”<sup>33</sup>  
The relevant National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that health, wellbeing and health infrastructure must be considered in local and neighbourhood plans. Decision-making should promote physical activity, consider health infrastructure implications of proposed development, promote access to healthy food, and consider pollution and other hazards which might impact on human health. The PPG also recognises that Health Impact Assessments may be a useful tool in identifying significant impacts on the health of local people as a result of new developments.
- 8.2.3 The community facilities in the Neighbourhood Area are highly valued by local residents and existing facilities should therefore be protected, and new facilities provided where desired and practicable. The NPPF states that existing open space, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:  
the open space is surplus to requirements;  
the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quality and quantity in a suitable location; or  
the development is for alternative sports and recreation provision.

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<sup>33</sup> *Op cit*, paras 96-97.

The provision of new community facilities is supported in SWDP Policy 37, particularly where proposals have resulted from neighbourhood planning. Although the neighbourhood area has, for a rural community, a good range of recreational facilities, there are opportunities for enhancement. The Cricket Club in Martley is currently constructing a new pavilion and there are proposals to upgrade the existing changing rooms to make them more suitable for women's and children's teams.

- 8.2.4 Policies MKD10, MKD11 and MKD12 concern the steps needed to promote health and wellbeing, the provision and protection of recreational open space, and provision and protection of local community and leisure facilities.

#### Policy MKD10 - Promoting Health and Wellbeing

Development proposals will be supported where they contribute to the health and wellbeing of local communities, for example through:

1. Provision of facilities that support public transport use or opportunities for active travel, enabling convenient, safe and attractive access to employment, homes, schools, and other facilities;
2. Provision of opportunities for fresh food growing;
3. Provision of opportunities for outdoor social interaction including seating and shaded areas.

#### Policy MKD11 - Providing, Enhancing and Protecting Recreation Open Space

Proposals in very special circumstances, for example for essential infrastructure that cannot be provided elsewhere, that will result in any loss of recreation open space at the Sport Martley facilities, or at the playing field and play area next to the Martley Memorial Hall, will not be supported unless an assessment has clearly shown the recreation open space that would be lost is surplus to requirements, or the loss will be replaced by equivalent or better provision in a no less accessible location for users.

#### Policy MKD12 - Providing and Protecting Local Community and Leisure Facilities

The provision of new community and leisure facilities or the enhancement of existing facilities (identified on Map 10) is supported. Development proposals that provide community and leisure facilities will be required to demonstrate that:

1. The siting, scale and design respects the character of the surrounding area, including any historic and natural assets;

2. The local road network is capable of accommodating the additional traffic movements; and
3. Adequate parking is provided on the site.

Development proposals, including changes of use, that will result in loss of all or part of the community and leisure facilities identified on Map 10 will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the existing use is no longer economically viable or equivalent or better provision of the facility to be lost is made in an equally or more accessible location. If the existing use is no longer economically viable, evidence should be provided to show that the site has been actively marketed, at the market rate current at the time, for at least 12 months and that no sale or let has been achieved during that period.

## 9 Local economy

### Neighbourhood Plan objectives

Objective 2: To maintain a range of employment opportunities for local residents, including workplaces in industrial and office estates and home-based work.

### 9.1 Employment

- 9.1.1 The 2021 Census recorded that 60% of residents of working age in the Neighbourhood Area were economically active, a decline from 71% in 2011. All but 3% were in employment. Despite the rural nature of the Parishes, only 5% of the workforce was employed in agriculture. The most important sources of employment were public administration (28%); finance, professional and administrative work (18%); distribution, hotels and restaurants (15%); and manufacturing (13%).
- 9.1.2 There are several small businesses based in the Neighbourhood Area, including firms based at the Maylite Trading Estate and the Edgar Estate located between Martley Village and Berrow Green and in barn conversions near local farms. The industrial estates include serviced offices. There are scattered workplaces throughout the three Parishes including a welding company, a bus garage, and a lorry depot. All of these places of employment are outside the settlement boundary. Apart from the two licensed premises, there is a shop with a post office counter in Martley Village which serves a wider rural area. However, by far the largest single employer in the neighbourhood area is the Chantry School with over 100 staff. This attracts considerable retail trade to Martley, provides business for the bus garage, and generates local traffic in the mornings and early evenings.
- 9.1.3 The popularity of the Neighbourhood Area for walking generates opportunities for marketing the neighbourhood area as a tourist destination based on country sports and activities rather than visiting historic sites. This would support local shops, public houses and bed and breakfast establishments
- 9.1.4 There is sufficient vacant space for new industrial and commercial development in the local trading estates for any foreseeable expansion in local employment. However, the creation of large new trading estates or the expansion of existing ones could have a negative impact on the rural characteristics of the neighbourhood area. This would not be the case with the conversions of redundant buildings on smaller sites, or an expansion of home-based employment. Policy MKD13 concerns the conversion of redundant or disused buildings for employment or other non-residential uses.

#### Policy MKD13 - Re-use of Redundant or Disused Buildings

The reuse of redundant or disused buildings for business, leisure or residential purposes will be supported, provided that the proposed use meets all the following criteria:

1. The development would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.
2. Design proposals respect the character and significance of the redundant or disused building.
3. The proposal is compatible with neighbouring uses, including any continued agricultural operations and would not cause undue environmental impacts.
4. The buildings are of permanent and substantial construction capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction; and
5. The building is capable of accommodating the proposed new use without the need for substantial alteration or extension, ancillary buildings, areas of hard standing or development which individually or taken together would adversely affect the character or appearance of the building or have a detrimental impact on its surroundings and landscape setting.

- 9.1.5 Local strategic planning policy is set out in SWDP 12 which protects existing employment sites in the rural area and supports the expansion of existing employment sites and farm diversification. In this policy context and, in order to meet the objectives of this plan, the following policy is proposed.

#### Policy MKD14 - Supporting Local Employment

The following forms of employment development will be supported:

1. Intensification (or expansion where intensification is not viable or practical) of existing business (B1), general industrial (B2) and warehousing development (B8) and uses at Maylite Trading Estate and Edgar Estate.
2. Extensions to existing rural B1, B2 and B8 premises and new tourism and leisure related development;
3. Rural diversification at existing agricultural and other land-based rural businesses providing:  
The proposed new use does not detract from, or prejudice, the existing undertaking or its future operation; and  
The scale of activities associated with the proposed development is



appropriate to the rural character of the area; and

It is demonstrated that additional floorspace is necessary to accommodate employment activity that cannot be accommodated in existing buildings within the undertaking.

Extensions to existing dwellings to support home-based working where this would not lead to an adverse impact on visual amenity or the amenity of adjacent users and uses.

## **9.2 Connectivity**

- 9.2.1 In common with many rural areas, the three Parishes have a high proportion of people working from home, in most cases managing their own businesses. There is a strong national trend towards working from home, but this depends on the availability of fast and reliable Internet connections. This can be difficult to achieve in rural locations distant from the Internet cabinet. To overcome this problem, the local company Martley Web Mesh has been operating for fifteen years with a volunteer labour-force providing a high speed, fibre-based wireless-distributed network for subscribers. Policy MKD15 supports the provision of new communication technologies in all new development.

### **Policy MKD15 - Supporting New Communication Technologies**

Improvements to broadband infrastructure will be supported. Any new development within the Parish should be served by a superfast broadband (fibre optic) connection unless it can be demonstrated through consultation with the NGA Network providers that this would not be possible, practical or economically viable. In such circumstances, suitable ducting should be provided within the site and to the property to facilitate future installation.

## 10 Transport and travel

### Neighbourhood plan objectives

Objective 5: To hand to future generations of the three parishes as good as or even better quality of life than the one we have inherited

### 10.1 Travel options

- 10.1.1 The main road through the Neighbourhood Area is the A44 from Worcester to Bromyard, which passes through Doddenham and Knightwick Parishes. All other roads are minor roads, and include the B4204 from Worcester to Tenbury Wells which passes through Martley Village, and the B4197 from Great Witley and which connects Martley and Knightwick Villages. The latter road passes over Ankerdine Hill, is narrow, winding and steep in places, and has a weight restriction. The nearest railway station is eight miles away in Worcester.
- 10.1.2 For most people in the three Parishes, transport means using a car. The Malvern Hills District has one of the highest rates of car-ownership in England, and rates of multiple ownership are highest in rural areas. The 2021 Census found that 94% of households in the Neighbourhood Area owned a private motor vehicle, and that the majority had more than one. Among those in employment, 31% worked mainly at or from home. This figure may, however, been somewhat inflated because of COVID restrictions at the time of the Census. A small number (3%) travelled to work on foot, but almost all the rest used a private vehicle, either as driver or passenger.
- 10.1.3 Travel to school or college presents a different picture because of the availability of a primary school and high school in Martley Village, and the existence of bus services for students attending the technical and sixth form colleges in Worcester. Nevertheless, a survey in Martley Parish in 2011 found that the car was the still the most common form of transport for this group. The use of a car to take children to school (and the use of cars generally in the Parish) is not only a result of distance, but also of the lack of footpaths along several roads and the narrowness of the footpaths that do exist. This makes walking between settlements (such as between Sunningdale and Knightwick or between Hillside and Martley or from Berrow Green to Martley) perilous, particularly at night-time. The other main road safety problems identified in the household surveys were crossing the A44 in Knightwick and crossing the road by the three-way junction in the centre of Martley Village. The latter is used by many children on the way to school. Martley Parish Council has begun to create a new public footpath along Church Lane to provide safer travel to and from the primary and secondary schools.

10.1.4 Heavy use of motor vehicles results in traffic congestion in the centre of Martley Village each day at the times the schools open and close. This is despite the availability of school buses, which are actively managed by the Chantry Academy. There is an associated problem with parking because there are insufficient spaces at the schools and no parking space in the centre of the Village. Parking problems in Knightwick Village usually occur in the old main road leading to the GP Surgery and the Knightwick Butchers. This problem has become worse with the growth of the GP surgery from 3700 registered patients in 2014 to 5000 in 2024. Speeding traffic along the A44 at the crossroads leading to Alfrick and Suckley is also a problem.

10.1.5 Public transport in the neighbourhood area is restricted to two bus routes: the 420 service from Worcester to Hereford, which passes through Knightwick; and the 310 services from Martley to Worcester. Both services are infrequent and do not run in the evenings. They are therefore inadequate for people who wish to use public transport to work in Worcester or any other neighbouring town. Nevertheless, the bus service is essential for the 10% of the population in the neighbourhood area who do not own a car. This group includes a small number of disabled people who live in isolated settlements and are unable to get to the local GP surgery, public houses or local events. Volunteer-staffed community transport has been developed for the parishes of Broadwas, Knightwick and Doddenham.

10.1.6 There are no designated cycleways in the three parishes, although the area is much used for competitive cycling. The hilly local terrain, the lack of designated cycleways and the narrowness of many local roads all act as disincentives to greater use of bicycles.

## 10.2 Promoting sustainable transport

10.2.1 The NPPF requires local plans to protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes<sup>34</sup>. Developments should therefore be located and designed to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities. To meet the guidance set out in NPPF and the strategic objectives of this plan, the following planning policy is proposed:

Policy MKD16 - Transport Management

Locally determined expenditure arising from developer contributions and other development related sources will be utilised to support:

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<sup>34</sup> *Op cit*, para 114.

Investment in public transport provision.

Provision of pavement, cycle and walking routes and safe crossing places for pedestrians on major roads.

- ▶ Introduction of measures designed to slow vehicular speed and car parking.

New development should be designed in such a way to encourage slower speeds in keeping with the local area.

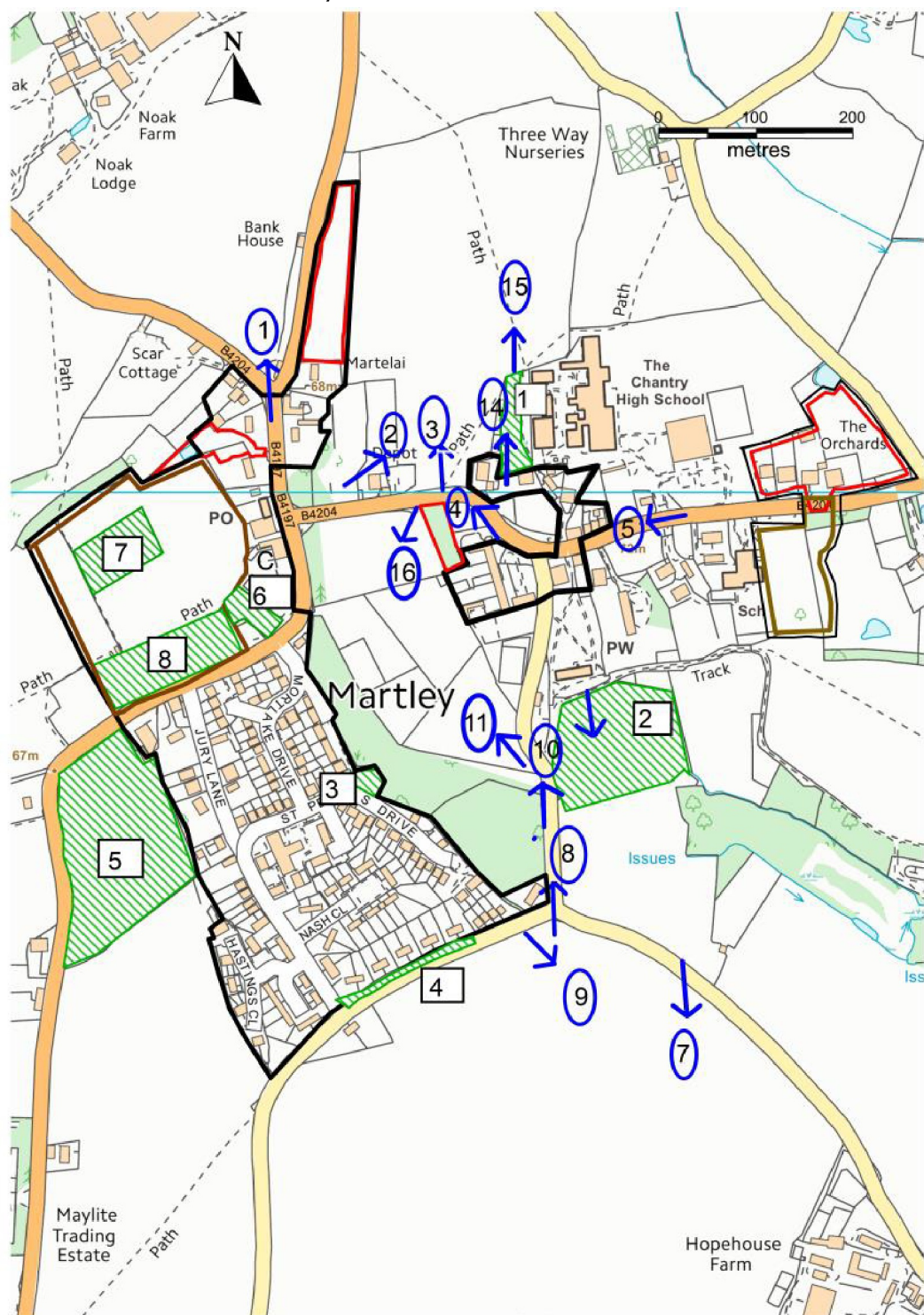
## Appendix 1. Significant views

### Martley Village

- A1.1 As noted in the main text, the *Martley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2006* identified 17 significant views, both from within the Conservation Area and looking towards it. These are listed on pages 10 – 13 of the *Conservation Area Strategy*. All but four of these views remain significant and have not substantially changed since the completion of the Strategy. The exceptions are Views 2, 6, 12, 13 and 17, which have been blocked by housing development and tree-planting. A further view (View 18 – South from the Parish Church, across the Millennium Meadow and across to the ridge line and Hopehouse) was marked on the map in the Conservation Area Strategy report (but was not numbered).
- A1.2 The remaining significant Views from within the Martley Conservation Area are listed below and shown in Map 11 (with text adapted from the *Conservation Area Strategy*).
1. The view north out of the conservation area takes the eye up to the fork of the Clifton and Great Witley roads and then just beyond, but with the view terminated by the steep cutting formed in the New Red Sandstone cliff at Scar Bank.
  3. A little up the road to the east of The Smithy, there is a fine view across open fields to the north and north east, with distant views to the Abberley Hills.
  5. From just outside the Chantry School, there is a diminishing view along the Worcester Road into the village to the West, towards Maple Cottages, with roadside trees forming a suitable frame.
  7. From the Southern extremity of the Conservation Area, along Hopehouse Lane, there is a very fine view of Ducton Coppice.
  8. From the South end of Church Lane looking North, there is a fine long view of the Church with the central part of the Conservation Area behind.
  9. Looking east-south-east from this point, a fine view unfolds with Hopehouse Farm on its ridge in the distance.
  10. Looking from Church Lane, a closer view of the Church emerges, with the Chirchyard trees beyond.
  11. By the junction of Church Lane with the path to the Church, there is a view across the Paddocks to the Smithy.
  14. Looking from just north of Ivy Cottage, the view north out of the Conservation Area lies along an avenue of damson trees.
  15. From the field style on the Worcestershire Way as it enters Martley, the view South towards the Conservation Area and Ivy Cottage is back along the damson avenue.



**Map 8: Protected views within Martley Conservation Area**



16. Looking South across the Paddocks towards Martley Court, the fine open view is terminated by the belt of trees on the south-western edge of the Conservation Area.

18. View south from the Parish Church across the Millennium Green to Hopehouse Farm.

A1.3 The original neighbourhood plan included four additional significant views outside the Conservation Area. Two of these views have been lost or will be lost because of housing development. The two remaining are:

1. Looking East from the gate just South of the road from the Crown, across the Paddocks towards the barns around Martley Court and the Parish Church. This view is particularly treasured because it is one most people in the village see every day.



3. Looking North from the top of Hollins Lane across the fields to the village with the ridge of hills leading up to Woodbury Hill. This is shown in Figure 9.

A1.4 The original neighbourhood plan included significant views around Knightwick village. These are unchanged.

1. The view from Ankerdine Common and along the crest of the hills to the North provides one of the great panoramas of England, looking South to the Malvern and Suckley Hills, across the valley of the Severn to Bredon Hill, and West to Bringsty Common in Herefordshire.



2. Looking North from the old footbridge across the Teme across the broad riverside meadows towards the wooded hills which progressively enclose the river.



3. From the rising ground at the South of Knightwick Chapel, across the Knightwick Gap to Ankerdine Hill.



## Appendix 2. Glossary

**Affordable housing:** Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as “low cost market” housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

**Allocation:** Land that has been identified for a specific use in the current development plan.

**Ancient Woodland:** Ancient Woodlands are sites which have been continuously wooded for over 400 years. Consequently they are of greatest biodiversity and ecological interest and considered irreplaceable. There are three categories, i.e. Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW), Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS), Restored Ancient Woodland Sites (RAWS) and they all have equal protection under SWDP 22 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework.

**Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB):** A nationally-designated area under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 in respect of which relevant authorities “shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area”. This term has now been superseded by ‘National Landscape’.

**Biodiversity:** The variety of different types of plant and animal life in a particular region.



**Brownfield:** (or **Previously Developed Land**). In the sequential approach towards identifying sites suitable for development, this is considered to be preferable to greenfield land for new building. Planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed, provided that it is not of high environmental value. This is land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

**Character Zone:** A defined area within a settlement where buildings share a distinctive local character in terms of use (eg residential), form, scale, height, materials, layout etc.

**Commitments:** Development proposals that already have planning permission or are allocated in adopted development plans.

**Community Facilities:** Buildings, services and land uses intended to meet the health and wellbeing, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community.

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):** The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge that local authorities in England and Wales are empowered, but not required, to charge on most types of new development in their area. CIL charges are based on simple formulae that relate the size of the charge to the size and character of the development paying for it. This allows Local Authorities to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects in their area. It can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure (i.e. transport schemes, schools, etc.) that are needed to support the development of the local area.

**Conservation Area:** An area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. It is statutory recognition of the value of a group of buildings and their surroundings and of the need to protect not just individual buildings, but the character of the area as a whole.

**County Biodiversity Action Plan:** The Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is the County's response to the national biodiversity planning process. The Worcestershire BAP was produced in 1999 and consists of a series of Species and Habitat Action Plans, setting out current status, targets for protection and enhancement to be carried out by



each partner organisation. This document takes the objectives of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and translates them into a Worcestershire context, with targets and actions for each important habitat and species.

**Designated heritage asset:** A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

**Development Boundary:** The dividing line, or boundary between areas of built/urban development (the settlement) and non-urban or rural development – the open countryside.

**Development Plan:** A statutory document, which sets out the local authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land in their area. The SWDP forms a key part of the development plan and guides and informs day-to-day decisions as to whether or not planning permission should be granted, under the system known as development management. The development plan also includes minerals and waste plans prepared by the County Council and any adopted neighbourhood plans. Legislation requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

**Development Plan Documents (DPD):** A document which is part of the development plan and forms part or the whole of a local plan.

**Greenfield:** Land that has not been developed previously. Applies to most sites outside built-up areas and land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments.

**Green Infrastructure (GI):** A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

**Heritage asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

**Housing Market Areas:** These areas illustrate the influence of an urban area on its immediate surroundings. Housing market areas have been defined by analysing commuting and migration patterns. Significantly these areas are not bound by administrative boundaries.

**Housing Needs Assessment:** An assessment of housing needs in the local area. This assessment plays a crucial role in underpinning the planning policies relating to affordable

housing. In addition, the information on local needs is required to determine the location of such housing and guide new investment.

**Infrastructure:** The network of essential physical services that most buildings or activities are connected to. It includes not only physical services in an area (e.g. gas, electricity and water provision, telephones, sewerage) and networks of roads, public transport routes, footpaths and such, but also community facilities and green infrastructure. New or improved infrastructure will generally need to be provided where significant levels of new development are proposed.

**Landscape Character Assessment:** An assessment undertaken to help identify various landscape types with a distinct character that is based on a recognisable pattern of elements, including combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.

**Listed Building:** A building or structure of special national architectural or historic interest; it is protected by law from unauthorised alterations or demolition. In addition, when determining applications for any development that might affect a listed building, it is relevant to consider the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. Structures within the curtilage will normally be included within the listing.

**Live/Work Unit:** A purpose-designed unit or group of buildings enabling the occupiers to live and work within the same premises.

**Local Plan:** An individual or collection of development plan documents forming the statutory development plan prepared by an individual local planning authority.

**Local Green Space:** Green areas or spaces which meet the criteria set out in the NPPF, ie where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves, where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife, and where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

**Low Cost Housing:** Housing rented or sold at less than full market value. This is not necessarily classed as affordable housing.

**Major Development:** Unless otherwise stated, for residential uses major is defined as 10 units or more and for non-residential uses, major is defined as exceeding 1,000msq(net) floor space.

**Mitigation Measures:** These are measures requested and/or carried out in order to limit the damage by a particular development / activity.

**National Landscape:** This is the new name for an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (see above).

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The government expects it to provide a framework within which local people and their accountable councils produce their own local and neighbourhood plans. The Framework constitutes guidance for local planning authorities and decision-takers both in drawing up plans and as a material consideration in determining applications. The latest version was adopted in December 2023.

**Neighbourhood Area:** The extent of the physical area which is covered by the policies and proposals in a neighbourhood development plan. This is usually the area within the parish boundary where the responsible body is the parish council, or the area covered by the group of parishes where two or more parish councils are working together to prepare the plan. An application must be made by a parish or town council to the local planning authority for a neighbourhood area to be designated (see regulation 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)). This must include a statement explaining why the proposed neighbourhood area is an appropriate area.

**Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Plan:** These were introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and can be prepared by a Parish or Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum to establish general planning policies or allocate land for development in a particular neighbourhood. Subject to conformity with the strategic policies in the local plan, an independent examination and support in a community referendum, Neighbourhood Plans will become part of the development plan.

**Older People:** People over retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly, whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing for those looking to downsize from family housing and the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

**Open Space:** All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

**Permeability:** The extent to which urban forms permit (or restrict) movement of people or vehicles in different directions.

**Public Realm:** The space between and within buildings and developments that are publicly accessible, including streets, squares, parks and open spaces.

**Renewable and Low Carbon Energy:** Renewable and low carbon energy includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

**Rural Exception Site:** Rural exception sites should be small, solely for affordable housing and on land within or adjoining existing small rural communities, which would not otherwise be released for general market housing because it is otherwise subject to policies of restraint (e.g. in the countryside or where policies maintaining the openness of the landscape are in place). The affordable housing provided on such sites should meet local needs in perpetuity and count towards the overall level of housing provision.

**Scheduled Monument:** A nationally important archaeological site or historic building, given legal protection against unauthorised change. The protection is offered under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

**Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** Sites or areas designated as being of national importance because of their wildlife, plants or flowering species and / or their unusual or typical geological features. SSSIs are identified by Natural England and have protected status under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

**Social Rented:** This is housing available to rent at below market levels. Lower rents are possible because the Government subsidises local authorities and registered social landlords in order to meet local affordable housing needs.

**Special Wildlife Site:** A local / wildlife site identified by the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and Worcestershire Special Wildlife Sites Partnership.

**Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA):** A SFRA is a high-level assessment of flood risk carried out by or for planning authorities to meet the needs of national legislation with the purpose of assisting local authorities to deliver sustainable development. The SFRA has informed the various allocations and sets the context / parameters for more detailed Flood Risk Assessments associated with planning applications.

**Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAA):** These are a key component of the evidence base required to support the delivery of sufficient land for housing to meet the community's need for more homes. These assessments are required by national planning policy as set out in the Framework.

**Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA):** This analyses data and trends relating to local housing markets and issues of affordability of housing within the sub-regions of Worcestershire.

**Supplementary Planning Document (SPD):** SPDs are Local Development Documents that explain how policies in Development Plan Documents will be implemented. They do not form part of the SWDP and cannot allocate land, but are material considerations when determining planning applications.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA):** The European Directive 2001/42/EC on “the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment” is known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment or SEA Directive. The directive applies to any land use plans and modifications that began to be prepared after 21 July 2004. It also applies to any land use plans that have not been adopted or submitted to a legislative procedure leading to adoption by 21 July 2006. The Department of Communities and Local Government has published guidance on how to undertake a SEA of land use plans and how the methodology may be expanded to incorporate sustainability appraisal.

**Sustainable Development:** In broad terms, this means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Government has set out five guiding principles for sustainable development in its strategy ‘Securing the future - UK Government strategy for sustainable development’. The five guiding principles, to be achieved simultaneously, are:

1. Living within environmental limits.
2. Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society.
3. Achieving a sustainable economy.
4. Promoting good governance.
5. Using sound science responsibly.

The NPPF sets out a definition of sustainable development and identifies how it is to be identified and delivered.

**Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS):** Efficient drainage system that seeks to minimise wastage of water, including the use of appropriate groundcover to enable maximum penetration of clean water run-off into the ground, promote the filtration and evaporation of water as close to the source as possible and break down pollutants and, where appropriate, recycle grey water within the development. Designed to minimise the impact of development on the natural water environment, they are an alternative to drainage through pipes directly to a water course and help enhance water quality and biodiversity, maintain groundwater levels and reduce the risk of flooding.



